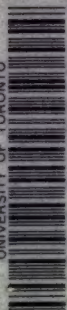


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THE · ART · OF  
THE · PLASTERER

"The greatest Art in the world was done for its place and in its place."

—RUSKIN.







FIG. 1.—HARDWICK HALL, DERBYSHIRE: PORTION OF MODELLED AND TEMPERA-PAINTED FRIEZE ON WALL OF PRESENCE CHAMBER.



# THE · ART · OF THE · PLASTERER

AN · ACCOUNT · OF  
THE · DECORATIVE · DEVELOPMENT · OF · THE · CRAFT

*chiefly*

IN · ENGLAND · FROM · THE · XVI<sup>th</sup> · TO · THE · XVIII<sup>th</sup> · CENTURY

*With chapters on*

THE · STUCCO · OF · THE · CLASSIC · PERIOD  
AND · OF · THE · ITALIAN · RENAISSANCE

*also on*

SGRAFFITO · PARGETTING · SCOTTISH  
IRISH · AND · MODERN · PLASTERWORK

*by*  
GEORGE · P · BANKART  
*in*  
*Architect and Craftsman*

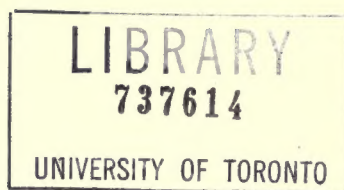
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## PREFACE.

THIS volume is the outcome of the Author's attempt to comply with the wish for a comprehensive treatise on the decorative bearing of the plasterer's art (as opposed to its mechanical side), which has been expressed by many architects, plasterers, and others who have been present at lectures on the subject which he has delivered from time to time in London and the provinces.

It is somewhat surprising that no work has hitherto been published attempting to adequately describe the development of the plasterer's ART *as differing from its mechanic side*, and to illustrate by modern methods of reproduction the richness of the examples still left to us, particularly in Great Britain. The subject has been very adequately dealt with *on its mechanical and trade side* by the late Mr William Millar in his "Plastering Plain and Decorative," but the history *and Art* of plasterwork form but an incidental portion of his book, not being within its scope, while the illustrations of historical plasterwork are comparatively few, and chiefly reproduced from old drawings. It must be acknowledged and admitted by all who knew him, that Mr Millar was a splendid mechanic rather than an artist of marked degree in his work.

It is needless to say that an exhaustive treatise on so extensive a subject would occupy the leaves of many volumes rather than one, and that only by condensing the matter, as here attempted, can it be brought within the reach of the great majority of those especially interested in English work. Chapters on Classic and Italian Renaissance work are included, as some knowledge of these is necessary to a right understanding of the development of English work. Plasterwork in France and other European countries and in the East is little touched upon, as it is felt that these branches of the subject require separate treatment, beyond the scope of the present volume. A passing reference is, however, made to French work, sufficient to indicate the connecting link between the original Italian and the English schools; but it must not be assumed from this that the author entertains particular predilections or prejudices for vernacular or other work, his original intention being to deal in greater bulk and at equal length with the art, not only in this country, but also where it lived and flourished as a still greater art and master craft on the continent of Europe.

It should be stated that in some cases the dates and names referred to in connection with the design or execution of the work have been gleaned from the writings of recognised authorities on the periods which they have dealt with, and that, because of the irregular and gradual evolution of the work they have described, there is no distinct dividing line between period and period, enabling one to fix the limits exactly.

Owing to the increasing calls of a varied practice, and the unforeseen labour in the writing and condensing an exhaustive work of reference into one volume, the preparation of the book has taken much longer than was anticipated, but the Author hopes that to some extent it will still fill the place and help the cause for which it was originally intended; also that the series of illustrations, forming but a selection from the extensive collection in possession of the author, may have an interest amongst antiquarians, designers, and workers in the decorative arts.

The Author's acknowledgments for advice and assistance are many. Firstly, thanks must be expressed here to the many owners who have so kindly allowed him access to their mansions for the purpose of photographing the examples of plasterwork to be found in them. Secondly, his thanks are tendered to the photographers who contribute, both amateur and professional, for their good efforts on his behalf; particulars of their work will be found in the Note of Acknowledgment. Thirdly, the Author desires to thank those gentlemen who have so kindly permitted him to make use of drawings in their possession. The Author also is indebted to some editors and other gentlemen for the ready loan of blocks and to several of his colleagues for illustrations of their work.

The Author also desires to express thanks to his publisher for valuable assistance in the production of the book, and for the loan of books bearing on the subject; to Mr Harry Batsford for his valuable help and suggestions, which have been much appreciated; and to his pupil and assistant, Mr W. H. H. Aspell, for his ungrudging time and labour throughout.

BALDWIN'S GARDENS, GRAY'S INN ROAD,  
LONDON, E.C.

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*NOTE.*—In re-issuing the book, the opportunity has been taken of correcting and explaining a few points which appeared to some to be obscure.



## NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

WITH the exception of a few foreign subjects, the majority of the photographs have been taken by Mr Thomas Lewis, of Birmingham, through his chief operator, Mr R. G. Randall. Mr W. Galsworthy Davie must also be thanked for his photographs, chiefly of West Country examples, many of which have been sought for by him. Many other gentlemen, both professional and amateur, have contributed photographs, and the list of them is as follows:—

Messrs Valentine & Son, Fig. 69, St Michael's Mount; Mr G. W. Smith, Fig. 70, Queen's Head, Down; Mr H. C. Andrews, Figs. 71, 116, and 117, Parge-work at Hertford; Mr A. Whitford Anderson, Figs. 72 and 95, Wyvenhoe; Mr Horace Dan, Fig. 106, St Albans; Mr F. W. Count, Fig. 115, Cottage Frieze, East Dereham; Mr T. Stokoe, Figs. 118, 119, Exterior plaster at Clare; Mr J. C. Pickard, Figs. 135-138, Riddlesden Hall, Yorkshire; Mr Owen, Figs. 155-161, and 163 to 170, Plas Mawr; Mr Herbert Bell, of Ambleside, Fig. 183, Calgarth Hall, Fig. 184, Little Strickland Hall, and Fig. 185, Bleaze Hall, all in Westmorland; Mr C. Essenhigh Corke, Fig. 194, Knole Park; Messrs Bedford Lemere & Co., Figs. 203, 233, 236, 284, Audley End; Mr T. Jones, of Chester, Figs. 211, 212, Ceiling Ornaments; Mr Fred. Little, Figs. 245, 246, 250, Bristol; Mr George Fryer, Fig. 277, Boston House, Brentford; Mr R. Milliken, Kirkcaldy, Figs. 290, 303, 309-312, 324, 326, 330, Scotch ceilings; Mr J. Hervey Rutherford, Figs. 328, 329, Caroline Park; Mr Thomas Mayne, Figs. 335 to 339A, Dublin subjects.

The following is a list of gentlemen who have allowed their original drawings to be reproduced, or tracings made from them:—

Mrs W. Bliss Sanders, Fig. 85, Maidstone, from the late Mr Sanders' "Half Timber Houses and Carved Furniture" (drawn by Mr Maurice B. Adams, F.R.I.B.A.); Mr Sydney Vacher, Figs. 125, 126, Plaster Friezes; Mr J. C. Crocker, A.R.I.B.A., Figs. 141-147, and 230-232, Plaster at Exeter; Mr R. S. Dods, Figs. 151-153, Haddon Hall; Mr F. Musto, A.R.I.B.A., Figs. 181, 182, and 234, 235A, Mapledurham; Mr W. Talbot Browne, Figs. 186, 187, Plaster details; Mr E. W. Gimson, Fig. 201, South Wraxall; Mr B. J. Fletcher, Fig. 273, Benthall Hall, Shropshire; Mr John Murray, Figs. 291, 292, 294, 300, 314, 315, Scotch ceilings; Mr J. Hervey Rutherford, Fig. 297, The Green Room, Pinkie House, and Fig. 315A, Roman Eagle Hall, Edinburgh; Mr R. Watson, Figs. 295 and 296, Pinkie House, Figs. 302-304, Moray House; Mr Thomas Ross, Figs. 298, 299, Pinkie House; Mr J. Baillie, Figs. 305, 306, Wintoun House; Mr J. H. Cooper, Fig. 313, Lawnmarket; Mr R. S. Lorimer, R.S.A., Figs. 321-323, 325, 327, Kellie Castle; Mr Harry Sirr, F.R.I.B.A., Fig. 346, Ashburnham House; Mr John Stewart, Fig. 384, Pembroke College, Cambridge; Mr Heywood Sumner, Figs. 53-56, Sgraffito church decoration. Figs. 128, 133, 134, 216-219 are drawn from the author's sketch-book.

The author is indebted to Mr J. Starkie Gardner, F.S.A., Mr Reginald T. Blomfield, A.R.A., Mr Lawrence Weaver, F.S.A., the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the proprietors of the *Architectural Review* and of the *Home Counties' Magazine* for the loan of blocks or for permission to include subjects from books or papers.

Lastly he has to thank, for permitting the illustration of plasterwork designed or illustrated by them, Mr E. J. May (Fig. 445), Mr E. W. Gimson (Figs. 453, 454), Mr George Jack (Figs. 456-459), Mr R. S. Lorimer (Fig. 461A), and Mr H. Wilson (Fig. 463). All other illustrations in the chapter on modern work (excepting, of course, Figs. 432-447, and 465-472), are from subjects designed and executed by the author.



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# THE ART OF THE PLASTERER

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

THAT an art so extremely interesting and unique as that of the plasterer should have escaped record and consideration in any collected form at the present day is to be regretted. A material of so homely a character as plaster, so easy of manipulation, so reasonable of cost, associated as it has been in the past, and always must be, with the daily lives of all races of humanity, is surely worthy of some general survey for future reference and guidance. And it is the object of the writer in the following pages to offer to the public, to architects, plasterers, and other craft workers, not only some instances of what has been done, but of what may be gathered in body and spirit from the past use of so homely a material, once worthy of the best efforts of many of the greatest artists the world has produced.

This fact alone gives enough hope and belief that with the present re-awakening of the handicrafts connected with the great art of building, "Plaster" will again become the medium of decorative expression in the hands of men of education, refinement, and ability to understand and to use it from its simplest to its most elaborate form according to the possibilities and limitations of its nature as a material. As there are many individuals pessimistic enough to believe that nothing modern can ever be good, this expression of hope must not be taken as a note of despair. On the other hand, there is every sign of revival on sound and healthy principles.

During the past century "Plaster" has been so degraded that it is hardly possible to regard it as a medium of art, and things are now worse than they were before architecture became "a learned profession," before men had accustomed themselves to thinking on paper instead of through the material, knowledge of which is so essential to the proper development of the creative instinct.

Painting and sculpture of an academic nature received the most attention while the arts and crafts connected with building and manufacture were hardly noticed at all; but design was soon to become a matter of superficial appearance without reference to the material, and such decoration as could be had was the production of workmen out of touch with the draughtsman entirely, a person without any knowledge most probably of the nature of the material or of the scale of the work he was supposed to have in his mind.

There was thus a great gulf between the conceiver and the producer, but it is generally recognised now that the design and the work in hand cannot rightly be parted from one another without serious injury to both. "Decoration" is the most natural expression of an artist's feeling for his material; it is vitalised by the energy which is behind the tool, and is addressed to the senses of "seeing and feeling." It tells of a man's impressions, of his environment, of his susceptibility or dulness of nerve in the receiving and imparting of impressions of sense. It becomes an element as inseparable from his nature, from his personality and individuality, as cause from effect. An examination of the work of the past reveals

to us that a personality finding expression in some shape or form, good or bad, is in existence behind the design. We learn from their history the "why" and the "wherefore" of those methods of working and principles of treatment that may be most useful, provided we have sufficient force of character and individuality to think for ourselves; to see in the past the connection of "Art" with "Nature," how the old workman was content to absorb just so much of Nature as would be most useful to him, and to find his incentive there. Constructive design has a mission to fulfil, a purpose to serve, apart from "ornament." Ornament is a matter quite apart from constructive design, and is excusable and allowable only so far as it fulfils its own mission by being beautiful. This quality of beauty is again only to be considered in its suitability to the material from which it springs, to the place it is to occupy, and the purpose it is intended for. It has no right to a separate existence such as some "designers" seem to claim for it, but is nevertheless inseparable from the conception of art, for every lover of work obtains glimpses of it through his material, and its loveliness is its apology.

In all the best work of the past, simplicity and reticence will be found to be co-existent. As a general rule it will be found that the workers and thinkers of old, holding the traditions of their predecessors, found the motives of their decoration in the suggestions of Nature, and that the evidence of its derivation is preserved in its form and spirit.

Theirs was *not* the life-struggle of a commercial race, theirs not the humdrum work of servile workers attempting to realise the mathematically delineated visions of professional men shut up in offices; men whose ideas were borrowed from this place and that, and whose thoughts had mostly been stolen from other countries during various "holiday sketching tours."

It was the spontaneous and natural production of workmen trained from youth by a master hand, who lived and worked and moved about from place to place. It was the result of long-acquired information, of careful observation and *gradual training in the workshop, and so it must be again*. It may be argued that in the commonness and cheapness of the material in its various forms there is sufficient reason for thinking what form of decoration would be best suited to it, but it is not possible, under modern circumstances of office routine, with the architect who is the present-day thinker, and creator of form in building—not possible that he, engrossed as he must be with the vast amount of work to be got through, can ever understand the possibilities of the material *so well as the workman can or should*. On the other hand, this commonness of the material and the ease with which it is handled are mainly responsible for the contempt with which it has been treated during the last hundred years by the men as well as their masters.

The fact that there is at the present time something in the nature of a revival of the art of the plasterer is undoubtedly due to a reaction, such as it is, from complete stagnation. It is difficult to believe that there is no such reaction, and that the plasterer's trade will never regain the importance and high position amongst the sister arts that it once so long enjoyed.

The material, such as it is, combines extreme ease of manipulation with great durability; to no other do the associations of our daily life cling more closely than to that with which the walls and the ceilings of our homesteads are covered; from the humblest cottage to the sumptuous palace it is used as a

clothing to the rougher material composing the structure. It is intensely sympathetic, it is intensely susceptible to every touch received from the hand of the worker, and for this very reason no pains should be spared in the effort to make it seem to deserve its place in the buildings which we erect. It can be modelled, cast, incised, coloured, stencilled, or stamped with equal freedom from the size of a "cameo" to the vastness of a "dome." It may be set as a jewel, or it may be applied to the "façade" of a palace. As to its composition, it can be made coarse or fine, and either malleable or the reverse.

Pliny mentions its use by "goldsmiths" of early times for the sinking of "dies," in preference to wax. Also its use for "mirrors." So fine was the quality of the ancient "stucco" that it could be polished to a pitch of perfection for this purpose. Also we hear of its use in the modelling of a button, and on the cope of one of the popes. In this small space the Deity was revealed, surrounded by angels in the clouds of the heavens.

Although this volume is to a certain extent a history, excursions into the province of the archæologist will be avoided as far as possible, and in dealing with the educational side of the question the writer does not intend to favour either the craftsman or the designer, but to bring them together if possible. As our first business will be with that, we shall as far as possible arrange the chapters of this volume under the following distinct headings in order to avoid confusion in the description of the right and wrong processes of working the various materials, instead of as in the late Mr Wm. Millar's intentional general application of the term "stucco" to all varieties of plaster.

It must be remembered, also, that although the more general decorative use of plaster of Paris is dealt with in chapters dealing with distinct periods of the use of "stucco-duro," plaster of Paris was imported into this country in the reign of Henry II., whilst the stucco-duro art was introduced by Henry VIII., and that the earliest decoration in parge plaster now extant dates from about 1557.

With reference to the production of deeply undercut relief work in fibrous soft plasters—and in case it may be thought that my remarks are *prejudicial condemnation*—let it be said at once that such is in no way the case. The author, however, feels morally compelled, in the love he owes to his own craft, to draw particular attention to a faulty method of work due to the use of a material quite unsuited to the purpose, and to the great qualities demanded of it.

In doing this he compares the beautiful original, and the mistaken modern methods of producing the deeply undercut decoration, in the hope that some revival of the use of the proper plaster (stucco-duro) for such work may be brought about in any further and new Renaissance of the plasterer's art.

To ensure such a revival of *in situ* decoration on sound principles, architects have the matter in their own hands, and have only to INSIST, by modern means of specification, that builders shall lay down and keep in readiness for their use, "lime-putty" that shall have been slaked for years instead of weeks, as is done in Northern Italy at this day.

1. Stucco-duro, which is carbonate of lime.
2. The common sand, lime, and hair material known as "Parge."
3. Plaster of Paris (sulphate of lime).
4. Fibrous plaster work (plaster of Paris, canvas, and timber in combination).



## CHAPTER II.

## ANCIENT STUCCO-DURO.

IT would be extremely interesting to attempt to trace to some extent, throughout the infinite space of time, when and where plaster first became known as a decorative medium. It was to the employment of stucco that the crude unbaked mud bricks, or sun-baked brick walls of antiquity, owed their preservation.

Amongst the ruins of Mesopotamia, in buildings dating back probably from 3,000 to 3,500 years B.C., are to be found at the present time walls covered with stucco, which in a great measure owe their preservation to the use of this material. There were frescoes on these walls as a rule, and decorative modelling probably.

In a valuable paper on "The Excavations at Knossos," dating back some eighteen centuries B.C., Dr Evans announced that he had discovered a number of decorations in stucco—amongst them a bull's head and a human figure of exceptional refinement and power of modelling. A large number of fragments and details of modelled stucco were found that showed evidence of having been disposed throughout the palace, and seemed to have been used as the chief means of decorating the interior of the palace.

Amongst the illustrations shown by Dr Evans at the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition in 1903 were some drawings of fragments of a plaster ceiling, ornamented with a repeating pattern of connected spirals modelled in relief and decorated with colour. The best authorities give the date of the destruction of this building as some fifteen hundred years before Christ. Research shows that stucco of various kinds was used in very ancient days for the covering of walls. When and where it was *first* used is not known, but that it *was* used, and became a great art has been proved, and in the fact that it was so extensively practised there is quite sufficient warrant, I think, for going thoroughly into the history of it, whether the evidence is in the work, or in the descriptions of ancient writers.

We learn that the Egyptians covered their buildings with a slight coating of stucco to conceal the seams of the stones and take on the painted decoration. The pyramids of Memphis were lined with a coating of stucco, the remains of which are still to be seen.

The almost universal use of stucco in Greece has too often been overlooked. In early times it was usual to use inferior building materials, mud bricks, or rough kinds of stone, and to cover their surface wherever visible with a coat of stucco, which was frequently ornamented with frescoes or decoration of other kinds.

This applies to all the architectural members of early temples before the use



of marble became prevalent, and even after, when marble could not be easily obtained. For houses it probably remained the custom at all times, as the walls were mostly of unbaked brick. The quality of the early Greek stucco is wonderfully fine. In early times, so far as I know, the stucco was always the thinnest coating revealing the forms below, but in later Greek times examples of capitals of columns, bull heads, &c., are known to have been modelled or cast in this medium. The rough stone used by the Greeks was, like the Roman travertin, very porous, and not capable of taking a fine surface, so they stuccoed it over, polished it, and sometimes decorated it with paintings. Traces of this are to be found in the Dorian monuments of Sicily, at Pæstum, &c.

It should be explained that this "travertin," "travertino," or Tivoli stone (the Italian term for a solid concretionary limestone), was extracted from springs holding carbonate of lime in solution, formed in lakes and on hillsides, often it seems where there had been centres of ancient volcanic activity, whilst the Romans obtained their material from the quarries at Ponte Leucano. They first used a brown-coloured volcanic TUFA. This was superseded by a harder volcanic stone, now called PEPERINO (anciently known as Lapis Albanus and Lapis Gabinus), and later the harder and more valuable "travertin," called Lapis Tiburtinus (from Tibur, now Tivoli), which was introduced gradually, but which appears to have been very rarely used before the first century B.C., and then only for features of special constructional importance.

The earliest example known of the use of travertin is said to be at a tomb of Cecilia Metella, and there it is merely a veneer over a rubble wall of enormous thickness. This date is assigned by some authorities at 103 B.C. and by others at 50 B.C.

At Mycenæ the stucco used in archaic times yet exists. The Byzantine Greeks used stucco very generally in the cornices and enrichments of their churches, also in the window framings, and their mosaics were bedded in a *plaster-putty* composition of similar nature.

Viollet le Duc, in his *Dictionnaire Raisonné d'Architecture*, says:—

"The Romans used stucco very frequently, both for public monuments and private dwellings. It is useless here to quote the numerous examples of the use of stucco in Italy in ancient times. Its use was passed down to the Gauls, and there is not a single Gallo-Roman building in which the remains of stucco coatings, polished and painted, are not found. Building methods suffered the same fate as the arts; they were lost in the West towards the end of the Roman Empire, and the rare fragments of monuments of the early centuries show us nothing but coarse coatings made of inferior materials, badly dressed and covered with rude paintings. The Gauls, however, had not lost the custom of covering quarry-stone facings, and even rough courses, with a thin coating of lime and sand, to conceal the defects and joints of the stone, and to take on paint. But these plasters have no longer the beautiful polish that mark the stucco of *Grecian antiquity* and the best times of the Roman epoch, nor their solidity. They have consequently been rarely preserved, and their absence is too apt to make us believe that the Carolingian builders, for instance, allowed the rudely finished courses to be seen both inside and outside. Far from this, however, these buildings, though rude and barbarous, were covered with coatings and paintings, both in the interior and exterior, and their coatings, sometimes decorated with engravings and ornaments in slight relief, are real stucco work. A genuine

example of such belonging to the Carolingian period (752 to 986) is still to be seen in the little church of Germigny-des-Prés (Loiret), the building of which goes back to the beginning of the ninth century."

(Carlovingian kings are recorded as follows:—Pepin, "The Short," 752, son of Charles Martel; Charlemagne, "The Great," 769, Emperor of the West; Louis V., "The Indolent," 986, last of the race. Respecting this church, see remarks by M. Merimée, vol. viii. of the *Revue Générale d'Architecture*, M. C. Daly, p. 113.)

"A mosaic in the Greco-Byzantine style adorns the vault of the apse—the only mosaic of its kind in France. Formerly the walls of the church were adorned with stucco work, engraved and painted. These coatings, which have disappeared at the lower parts, are now only seen inside the central steeple, and particularly in the bays of this latter, which are composed of an archivolt resting on two small attached columns. These archivolts and columns are made entirely of a white stucco, fine and very hard, chiselled out while still soft.

"Art in a barbaric age by no means excludes profusion of ornament, in fact it is more often quite the contrary. There can be no doubt that Carolingian architecture, though rudely designed, and always built of worthless material, badly chosen, and even more badly used, included ornamentation, very rich, but obtained by cheap and rapid means. Stucco was well adapted for this style of cement decoration, and of all the traditions of art handed down from the Romans, this was bound to survive by reason of the facilities offered by the use of such processes. The method most readily followed by the builders of the first period of the Middle Ages was evidently to raise walls of quarry-stone, and, when the work was roughly finished, to conceal their irregularities by a coating on which chisellers and sculptors cut out ornamental designs taken from Eastern tapestries, furniture, and utensils. The process did not require the calculation and foresight of the masters of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Some Carolingian buildings show traces of stucco work on the vaults, and even on the capitals. The large capitals of the old narthex of St Remi of Reims, those of the crypt of St Laurent of Grenoble, and even of the capitals of the apse of the church of Issoire, are simply baskets of stone, covered with figures or ornaments in stucco. At a later period stucco-work was nothing but the delicate application of ornaments, trellis, and flowered chequer-work, on even surfaces to soften the bareness."

The foregoing remarks show that the properties of both stucco and plaster were well known in ancient times, but whereas full knowledge of the capabilities of stucco was arrived at very early, but little was known of plaster until comparatively modern times.

Stucco has for its base carbonate of lime, generally the burnt limestone or chalk of the rocks and hills.

Vitruvius, writing on architecture about 2,000 years ago, gives very detailed instructions as to its preparation. The stucco of those days was far more carefully compounded than it is now. The lime was very carefully selected, burnt with wood, and subjected to a very gradual process of slaking for a long time before it was used. It was constantly beaten with heavy sticks, and chopped up with a heavy hammer or axe. It was also subjected to frost, and was mixed with fine sharp sand and a white marble dust, which made it capable of receiving a fine polish. It has always been known to be necessary to toughen and regulate its setting qualities, and the ingredients in his time were:—juice of figs, rye dough,

hogs' lard, curdled milk, blood, &c., also two other important things of which we are sparing now, viz., *time, and the greatest care.*

Pliny mentions the use of fig juice, a very viscid sap, as being mixed with the stucco of his day.

White of eggs and blood are also mentioned as having been used to retard the setting of the plaster.

Elm bark and hot barley water (tannin and size) were mixed in the stucco used in the Justinian's Church of the Baptist, Constantinople. In later times at Rochester Cathedral, about the end of ninth century, bullocks' blood was mixed in the stucco and mortar.

In 1280, at Rockingham Castle, melted wax was used. On Queen Eleanor's Cross, Charing Cross, London, erected in the thirteenth century, the white of eggs and strongest wort of malt were mixed with the lime and Calais sand.

About 1324-1327, in King Edward II.'s work at Westminster, pitch was mixed in the stucco and mortar.

Wax, pitch, *urine, beer*, and size were also extensively used at that time for the same purpose.

Professor Middleton tells of "six strike of malt to make mortar, to blend with the lime, and temper the same, and 350 eggs to mix with it," viz., to seven quarters of lime. Mons. A. Darcel, director of the Cluny Museum, mentions the use of urine, in the sixteenth century, at Rouen.

In India and Ceylon sugar, and saccharine fruit juices, rice gluten, and other like compounds are used for increasing the hardness and retarding the setting process of the stucco, in order that more time may be allowed for its manipulation in modelling.

Mrs Merrifield, in her "Ancient Art of Painting," vol. ii., 638, gives a description of the grey stucco used by Italian masters for modelling replicas of their works executed in marble, and for their preliminary studies preparatory to cutting the marble, previous to the revival of the white stucco-duro by Giovanni da Undine. In this receipt we are told to—

"Take 5 lbs. of finely powdered travertin (and if you would have it finer and more delicate take fine marble instead of travertin), and 2 lbs. of slaked lime, mixed together with water, and stir and beat them well together to a fine paste, and execute what works you please with it, either by forming it with your hands or in moulds, and dry it in the shade.

"And if you wish to colour it white, when the work is dry enough to be tolerably firm but not quite dry, grind white lead with water in the same way as colours are ground, and flour (of finest particles) of sifted lime, and apply it with a pencil, and it will be very white, and effectually resist water.

"And if you wish to colour it with other colours, let the work dry perfectly, and then colour it; but these colours will not resist water like the white, because they do not incorporate or unite so well as that does with the materials of which the work is composed.

"If, then, you wish the colours to resist water, apply on the work the above-mentioned composition (which is to be used in the manner described), and paint it with oil colours. You may also colour the stucco with colours ground up dry, but these will not be so bright as if they were applied afterwards.

"This receipt is given in the Marciana MS., giving both the earlier and later composition, and tried by Master Jacopo di Monte S. Savino, the sculptor. Admirable stucco for making and modelling figures, and for colouring them, and it resists water."



The following receipt on "The Tempering of Lime for Stucco," from the translation by Joseph Gwilt of Vitruvius Pollio, is so important that we give it in its entirety :—

"Having given the necessary directions in respect of pavement, we shall explain the method of stuccoing. This requires that the lime should be of the best quality, and tempered a long time before it is wanted for use ; so that if any of it be not burnt enough, the length of time employed in slaking it may bring the whole mass to the same consistence. If the lime be not thoroughly slaked but used fresh, it will when spread throw out blisters from the crude particles it contains, which, in execution, break and destroy the smoothness of the stucco. When slaking is properly conducted, and care taken in the preparation of the materials, a hatchet is used, similar to that with which timber is hewn, and the lime is to be chopped with it, as it lies in the heap. If the hatchet strikes upon lumps, the lime is not sufficiently slaked, and when the iron of the instrument is drawn out dry and clean it shows that the lime is poor and weak ; but if, when extracted, the iron exhibits a glutinous substance adhering to it, that not only indicates the richness and thorough slaking of the lime, but also shows that it has been well tempered. The scaffolding being then prepared, the compartments of the rooms are executed, except the ceilings be straight."

Of stucco, Vitruvius says :—

"When arched ceilings are introduced they must be executed as follows :—Parallel ribs are set up, not more than 2 feet apart ; those of cypress are preferable, because fir is soon injured by the rot and age. These ribs being got out to the shape of the curve, they are fixed to the ties of the flooring or roof, as the case may require, with iron nails. The ties should be of wood, not liable to injury from rot, nor age nor damp, such as box, juniper, olive, heart of oak, cypress, and the like—common oak always excepted, which, from its liability to warp, causes cracks in the work whereon it is employed. The ribs having been fixed, Greek reeds previously bruised are tied to them in the required form, with cords made of the Spanish broom. On the upper side of the arch a composition of lime and sand is to be laid, so that if any water fall from the floor above, or from the roof, it may not penetrate. If there be no supply of Greek reeds the common slender marsh-reeds may be substituted, tied together with string in bundles of appropriate length, but of equal thickness, taking care that the distance from one ligature to another be not more than 2 feet. These are bound with cord to the ribs, as above directed, and made fast with wooden pins. All the remaining work is to be performed as above described. The arches being prepared and interwoven with the reeds, a coat is to be laid on the underside. The sand is afterwards introduced on it, and it is then polished with chalk or marble. After polishing, the cornices are to be run along the springing ; they are to be as slender and light as possible, for when large they settle by their own weight and are incapable of sustaining themselves. But little plaster should be used in them, and the stuff should be of uniform quality, such as marble dust ; for the former, by setting quickly, does not allow the work to dry of one consistence. The practice of the ancients in arched ceilings is also to be avoided, for their cornices are dangerous from their great projection and consequent weight. Some cornices are of plain, others of carved work. In small private rooms, or where fire or many lights are used, they should be plain to allow of being more easily cleaned ; in summer rooms and exedræ, where smoke is in such small quantity that it can do no injury, carved cornices may be used, for white works, from the delicacy of their colour, are always soiled, not only with the smoke of the house itself, but also with that of the neighbouring buildings. The cornices being completed, the first coat of the walls is to be laid on as roughly as possible, and, while drying, the sand coat thereon, setting it out in the direction of the length by the rule and square ; in that of the height, perpendicularly, and in respect of the angles, perfectly square, inasmuch as



plastering, thus finished, will be proper for the reception of paintings. When the work has dried, a second, and afterwards a third, coat is laid on. The sounder the sand coat is, the more durable will the work be. When, besides the first coat, three sand coats at least have been laid, the coat of marble dust follows, and this is to be so prepared that when used it does not stick to the trowel but easily comes away from the iron. Whilst the stucco is drying, another thin coat is to be laid on; this is to



FIG. 2.—Roman Stucco-Duro, from the Garden of the Villa Farnesina.



FIG. 3.—Roman Stucco-Duro, from the Garden of the Villa Farnesina.

be well worked and rubbed, and then still another, finer than the last. Thus, with three sand coats and the same number of marble-dust coats, the walls will be rendered solid and not liable to cracks or other defects. When the work is well beaten and the under coats made solid and afterwards well smoothed by the hardness and whiteness of the marble powder, it throws out the colours mixed therein with great brilliancy. Colours, when used with care on damp stucco, do not fade, but are very durable, because the lime, being deprived of its moisture in the kiln, and having become porous and dry, readily imbibes whatever is placed on it. From their different natures the various particles unite in the mixture, and, wherever applied, grow solid, and when dry the whole seems composed of one body of the same quality. Stucco, therefore, when well executed, does not either become dirty or lose its colours when washed, unless it has been carelessly done or the colour laid on after the work was dry; if, however, executed as above directed, it will be strong, brilliant, and

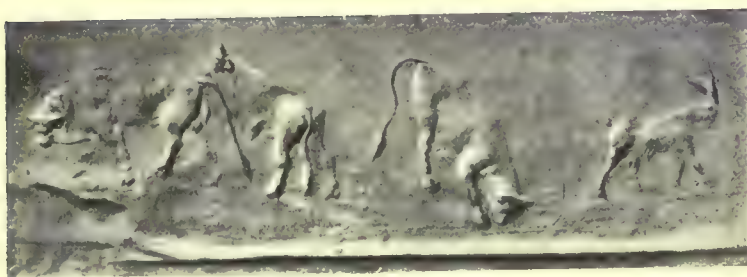


FIG. 4.

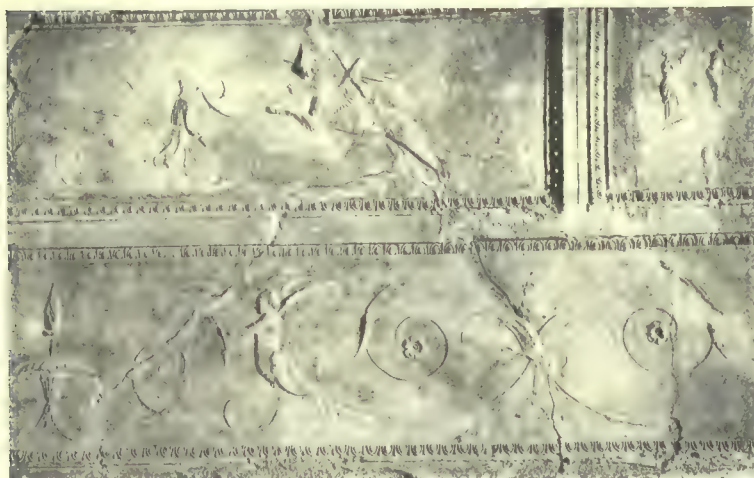


FIG. 5.

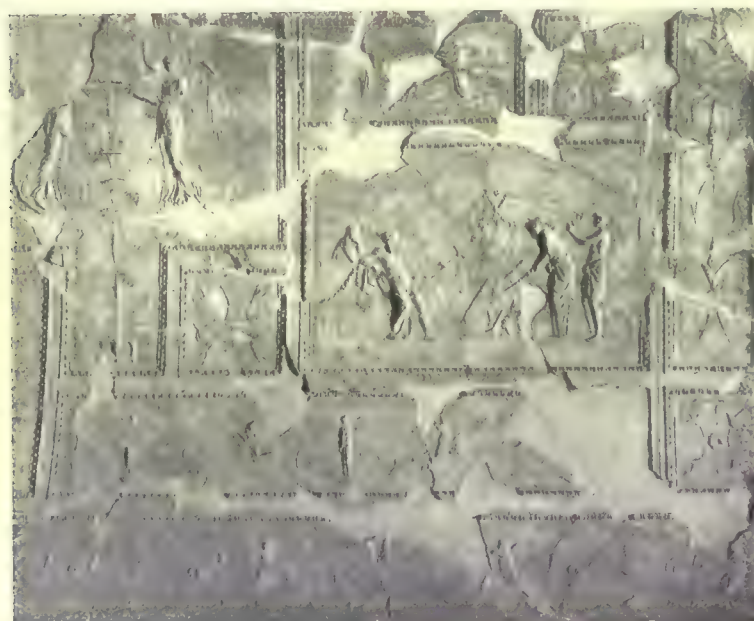


FIG. 6.

Roman Stucco-Duro, from the Garden of the Villa Farnesina.

of great durability. When only one coat of sand and one of marble dust are used, it is easily broken from its thinness, and is not on that account capable of acquiring a brilliant appearance. As a silver mirror made from a thin plate reflects the image confusedly and weakly, whilst from a thick solid plate it takes a high polish and reflects the image brilliantly and strongly, so plastering when thin in substance not only cracks but soon decays. On the contrary, that which is well covered with plaster and stucco, and closely laid on, when well polished, not only shines but reflects to the spectators the images falling on it.

"The plasterers of the Greeks thus not only make their work hard by adhering to the above directions, but when the plaster is mixed cause it to be beaten with wooden staves by a great number of men, and use it after this preparation. Hence some persons cutting slabs of plaster from the ancient walls use them for tables, and the pieces of plaster so cut out for tables and mirrors are of themselves very beautiful in appearance. If stucco be used on timber partitions, which are necessarily constructed with spaces between the upright and cross pieces, and thence, when smeared with clay, liable to swell with the damp, and when dry to shrink and cause cracks, the following expedient should be used. After the partition has been covered with the clay, reeds by the side of



each other are to be nailed thereon with bossed nails, and clay having been laid over these and another layer of reeds nailed to the former, but crossed in their direction, so that one set is nailed upright, and in the other horizontally, then, as above described, the sand and marble coats and finishing are to be followed up. The double row of reeds thus crossed on walls prevents all cracks and fissures."

Of stucco work in damp places the same writer said:—

"I have explained how plastering is executed in dry situations, now I shall give directions for it that it may be durable in those that are damp. First, in apartments on the ground floor, a height of 3 feet from the pavement is to have its first coat of potsherds instead of sand, so that



FIG. 7.—Roman Stucco-Duro, from the Garden of the Villa Farnesina.

this part of the plastering may not be injured by the damp. But if a wall is liable to continual moisture another thin wall should be carried up inside it, as far within as the case will admit, and between the two walls a cavity is to be left lower than the level of the floor of the apartment, with openings for air. At the upper part also openings must be left, for if the damp do not evaporate through these holes above and below, it will extend to the new work. The wall is then to be plastered with the potsherd mortar, made smooth, and then polished with the last coat. If, however, there be not space for another wall, channels should nevertheless be made, and holes therefrom to the open air. Then the tiles of the size of 2 feet are placed on one side over the side of the channel, and on the other side piers are built of 8-inch bricks, on which the angles of two tiles may lie, that they may be not more distant than palms from each other. Over them other tiles with returning edges are fixed upright from the bottom to the top of the





FIG. 8.—Roman Stucco-Duro, from the Garden of the Villa Farnesina.

wall, and the inner surfaces of these are to be carefully pitched over, that they may resist the moisture; they are, moreover, to have air holes at the bottom, and at top above the vault. They are then to be whited over with lime and water that the first coat may adhere to them, for, from the dryness they acquire in burning, they would neither take the coat nor sustain it but for the lime thus interposed which joins and unites them. The first coat being laid on, the coat of pounded potsherds is spread, and the remainder is finished according to the rules above given. The ornaments for polished stuccoes ought to be used with a regard to propriety, suitable to the nature of the place, and should be varied in their composition. In winter triclinia neither large pictures nor delicate ornaments in the cornice under the vault are to be introduced, because they are soon injured by the smoke of the fire and the quantity of the lights used therein. In these above the podium polished panels of a black colour are introduced, with yellow or red margins round them. The method of finishing plain as well as enriched ceilings having been described, it will not be amiss, in case any one should wish to know it, to explain the construction of the pavements used in the Grecian winter rooms, which is not only economical but useful. The floor of the triclinium is excavated to the depth of about 2 feet, and after the bottom is well rammed a pavement of rubbish or potsherds is spread over it with a declivity towards the holes of the drain. A composition of pounded coals, lime, sand, and ashes is mixed up and spread thereover, half a foot in thickness, perfectly smooth and level. The surface then being well rubbed with stone, it has the

appearance of a black pavement.

Thus, at their banquets, the liquor that is spilt, and the expectoration that falls on it, immediately dry up, and the persons who wait on the guests, though barefooted, do not suffer from cold on this sort of pavement."

Another passage, from Mrs Merrifield's "Ancient Art of Painting," may also be quoted in this connection:—

"It was generally applied in three coats, or as many as the nature of the wall required. The first coat was of rough stuff with broken marble, and the remainder of finer stuff, whilst the finishing coat was of very fine marble dust, which when dry was polished with marble dust and chalk. The more recent work was stone coloured from the use of powdered travertin, whitened with white lead ground in water."



FIG. 9.—Roman Stucco-Duro, *circa* first half of First Century.

With such a medium they modelled direct, as it set very slowly, and was smooth and hard. It was absolutely impervious to wet or climatic variations. So good was this preparation, and so smooth and hard, that jewellers used it in preference to wax, and modelling of such delicacy was done with it as to rival gem engraving. Vitruvius tells us it was capable of receiving so smooth a



FIG. 10.

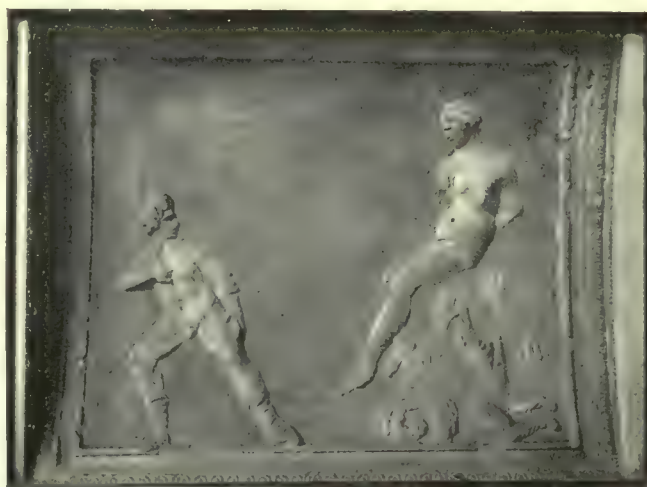


FIG. 11.



FIG. 12.



FIG. 13.

Stucco-Duro, first half of First Century. From Victoria and Albert Museum.

surface when polished, that it was used for mirrors. Its durability was such as to weather better than marble; such was the stucco used for the walls and plain surfaces for painting upon. It is therefore only natural to suppose and infer that the Greeks used this material to model with, knowing as they did its nature and pliability.

Unfortunately nothing remains to us of the masterpieces of Greece beyond





FIG. 14.



FIG. 15.



FIG. 16.



FIG. 17.

STUCCO-DURO, FIRST HALF OF FIRST CENTURY. EXAMPLES FROM BRITISH MUSEUM.



the skeletons of some of their private or public buildings. In these buildings the decoration must have been of costly materials. Pausanias tells us (A.D. 174) that he saw in the roof of the temple of Diana at Stymphalus figures of the Stymphalides, or the harpies, which were of stucco or wood—he could not determine which, but conjectured they were of wood.

The fact that stucco suggested itself to him as one of two probable materials indicates that it must have been in pretty general use, and there is no evidence brought to light of its not being in use.

As the Romans carried off the Greek treasures for the adornment of Rome,



FIG. 18.



FIG. 19.

Stucco-Duro, first half of First Century. Examples from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

and with them, undoubtedly, the art of the decorative stucco worker, it would be as well to look at some of the Roman work in which the influence of Greece is the strongest (Figs. 2-8, of stucco wall and ceiling decoration from a house of the time of Augustus in the garden of the Villa Farnesina, Rome, discovered in 1879, presumably belonging to the first half of the first century A.D., discovered during the canalisation of the Tiber). These stucco decorations consist of a series of panels divided by bands of "egg-and-tongue" mouldings. The panels are filled with figures representing winged Victories and genii—with larger panels of the Bacchic Sacrifice—exquisitely designed and modelled. Castings taken from some of these panels and other details are to be seen in the Victoria and

Albert Museum and the British Museum, some of which are illustrated in the accompanying figures (Figs. 9-26).

This work is undoubtedly Greek, for in the character of the modelling there



FIG. 20.



FIG. 22.



FIG. 21.



FIG. 23.

Stucco-Duro, first half of First Century. Examples from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

is strong evidence of the workmanship of the great artists of Greece—even the fragments of whose work are precious.

There is also the stucco modelling on the vault of a tomb in the Via Latina, which is of more primitive type, executed by torchlight, and intended to be seen



by torchlight only (Figs. 27-33). Fig. 34 is another example of similar character from Pompeii.

At Pompeii there are numerous examples of the decorative employment of stucco in very low relief, as for instance on the tomb of Scaurus which was painted and gilded; the relief not being much greater than in the lacquer-work of the Chinese.

At Baia the stucco decoration was of much finer character, but there is none of it now, owing to volcanic disturbances dating from 1750, when there was much of it left.



FIG. 24.

Roman Stucco-Duro.



FIG. 25.



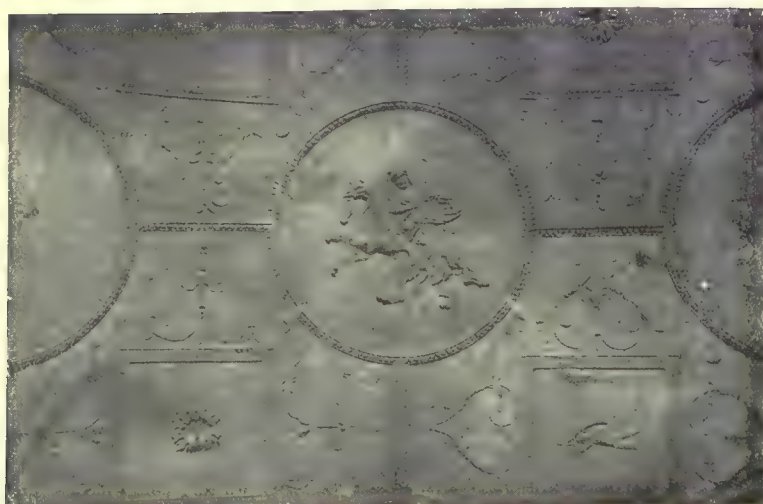
FIG. 26.

Stucco-Duro, first half of First Century. From the Victoria and Albert Museum. Coloured.

There was more of this stucco in Rome than anywhere else in Italy, and though there is now but little remaining, we still find the best of it there.

It is impossible to overrate the value of the lessons this work teaches, such beauty there was in the stucco, such purity in the design, such mastery in the execution; in a medium simple enough the art was all of the best, and art such as this is not at every one's call. Other examples existed, which played a most important part in the revival of this kind of stucco decoration during the early part of the sixteenth century. The reader should note in the modelling its delicacy and its simplicity; note also the incised lines which can be seen in some places produced





FIGS. 27-30.—ROMAN STUCCO-DURO, FROM A VAULT OF A TOMB OF THE VIA LATINA, ROME.



FIG. 31.



FIG. 32.

ROMAN STUCCO-DURO, TOMBS IN THE VIA LATINA, ROME.



by the swing of a metal tool; as in the work on the vault of the tomb of the Via Latina, where it is more noticeable than in the other examples which have been shown (see Figs. 28, 29, 30).

The date of the work would be about A.D. 160, and colour in this is beautifully combined with the modelling, more particularly in the panels of the lunettes, and between the mouldings, where the decoration is chiefly painted (see Figs. 31, 32, and 33). The Baths of Titus, or "The Golden House of Nero," were exhumed at the commencement of the sixteenth century, and revealed a wealth of the decorative art of the stuccatori, illustrated in the foregoing figures. Since then many buried treasures of this kind have been brought to light—in particular, Pompeii and



FIG. 33.—Roman Stucco-Duro, detail of part of a Vault from a Tomb in the Via Latina, Rome.

Herculaneum have provided us with examples which could hardly have survived the ravages of time but for the fact that they were buried in lava.

Such was the art of the stuccatori, dead only for a few centuries.

With the barbarism following the decadence of Rome, the art passed into a state of temporary obscurity, only to be resurrected and revived in the sixteenth century. We will pass over what are too carelessly called the "Dark Ages," and the pursuit of the art by the Arabs, only reminding the reader that the work of no less than five centuries can be seen in the Moorish palaces, and other buildings in Spain. There is no more instructive and wonderful example of plaster casting than that which we have in the Alhambra, where it shows an excess of richness



and elaboration, and yet has not lost that right quality of decoration in which the worker never lost sight of the fact that it was designed for casting. The effect of this work was heightened by a wealth of colour and gold.

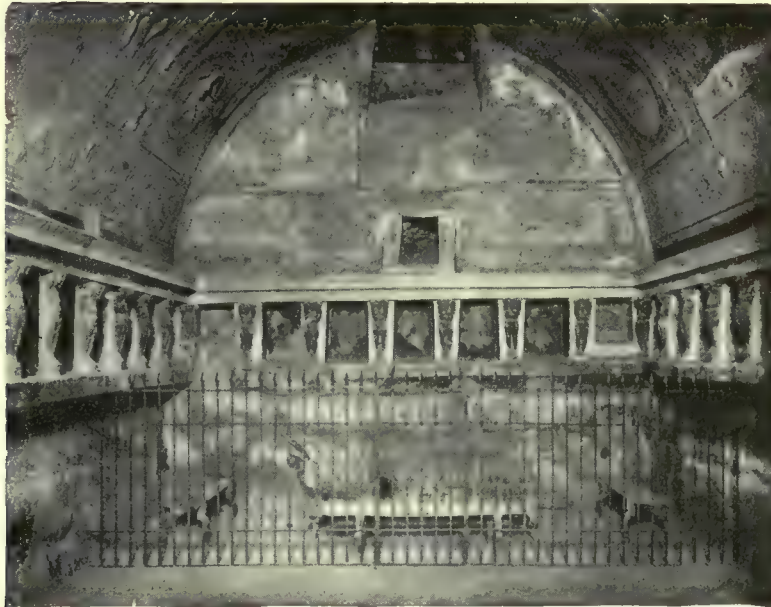


FIG. 34.—Roman Stucco-Duro, Tepidarium of the Baths of the Forum, Pompeii.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE STUCCO-DURO OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE.

It is necessary to take a brief and rapid survey of the stucco of the Italian Renaissance on account of the great excellence and profusion of the work, and the supreme importance of its influence on European art. This influence, as it spread through Europe in widening circles, naturally affected in a powerful degree, both directly and indirectly, the art of England.

The discovery of the stuccoes of ancient Rome, with finely modelled ornament in a state of excellent preservation, and the re-invention of the process of modelling in fine white plaster, created extraordinary interest, and the work occupied the attention of some of the greatest figures of the Renaissance; hence these notes are necessarily cast into a form mainly biographical, for the story is essentially a personal one.

The resurrection of the ancient art came about through the investigations and researches of Cardinal Giovanni de Medici in 1488 in seeking for sculpture of classic times. Giovanni was created Cardinal at the age of thirteen years, and acted upon advice received from his father, Lorenzo, "the Magnificent." Concerning his future, Lorenzo said: "Do not array yourself in silk and jewels; such things are not for you, but the collection of objects of antiquity, and rare books beseech you better." The Cardinal caused excavations to be made amongst the ruins of "The Golden House of Nero," or "The Baths of Titus," as we must call them now, with the result that besides unearthing some statuary, he found that the walls were covered with fine paintings and stucco-work, of which nothing was known before.

Here it will be well to quote what Vasari says of Morto da Feltro, translated from an old Italian edition:—

"He restored the practice of executing arabesques more nearly to that of the ancients than any other painter had done. Our first thanks and commendations are due to Morto, as he was the first to discover and restore the kind of painting called arabesque and grottesche. The painting of arabesque decoration was continued in Florence after the death of Morto by Andrea Feltrini, called di Cosimo de Feltrini, of Florence. It was by Andrea di Cosimo that the practice of covering the front of houses and palaces with an intonaco of plaster, wherein the black of ground charcoal or burnt straw had been mixed, was commenced, and which intonaco while in its fresh state he next covered with white, &c."

In Lanzi's "History of Painting," Morto da Feltro is identified with Pietro Luzzo da Feltro, called Zaroto or Zarotto, who was the disciple or assistant of Giorgione.

Vasari also mentions Mettidoro, Mariotto and Raffaello, Florentine painters who distinguished themselves in cloth and brocade designs, grotesques, and similar branches of fancy painting. Both were admirers of Andrea Feltrini, with whom

they remained till death. The last to die was Mariotto, whom he describes as a most practical artist who was clever at getting work, and, unlike Andrea, had the reputation of being dependable. He flourished about the year 1560.

Raphael and his assistant Giovanni da Udine were amongst the few who were allowed to see these discoveries, and so greatly was it admired that we hear next of their imitations.

From the gruesome circumstances under which these discoveries were made by Morto da Feltro, this kind of decoration was afterwards termed "grotesque." There is, however, little doubt that it was practised in North Italy at an earlier date than this, and possibly was initiated by Mantegna, or Squarcione, and employed and developed by Bramante in his erections at Milan, Como, and elsewhere.

Giovanni set to work experimenting; his labours to produce a material of a similar nature to the old composition were crowned with success, and the mixture described by Vitruvius was the outcome of his endeavours. The decoration of the loggie of the Vatican was given over by Raphael to Giovanni in 1513, this being the first work commissioned by the Cardinal after he became Pope (Figs. 35, 36). I refer to the old white "stucco-duro" the secret of which had been lost, and not to "stucco" as commonly used. This inferior material had long been known to the Florentine artists, and was in daily use for works of less importance.

Donatello (1383-1466) employed a composition of pounded brick and glue in his stucco, which much resembled terra-cotta, and is still mistaken for it sometimes. Most of the examples attributed to him in Continental collections are highly coloured, as most sculptures at that time were. The stucchi of the early Renaissance were mostly decorated with colour. The ground colours seem generally to have been laid on whilst the stucco was wet, as in fresco, and the details heightened with tempera, or encaustic colours, sometimes with accessories enriched in gilt "gesso."

Fifteenth-century sculptors were accustomed to make replicas of their works at this period, when colouring was applied to sculpture. This came, in course of time, to be considered a barbarism, but the scraping off of that colour of which certain French writers speak was making bad worse by a great deal.

Amongst the stucco and gesso work remaining to us, we undoubtedly have replicas of works executed in marble, long since vanished.

The enormous amount of decorative work which was done in the early sixteenth century demanded a speedy means of execution, and the revival of common stucco was the outcome, but Giovanni's experiments and work in the hard white stucco known as "Stucco-Duro" was really the starting point of the new system of internal decorative work. With such supporters as the Pope and Raphael, its career was as long and continuous as it was smooth.

Giovanni was engaged at the Vatican from 1504 to 1519 as Raphael's superintendent of stucco modelling and arabesque or grotesque painting, and was occupied on many other works of Raphael's until the death of his master.

Grottesque, now written grotesque, has during the last two centuries been employed in the sense of uncouth, whimsical, ludicrous, or misrepresentative, and the word "Arabesque" has usurped its place in historical language. But while



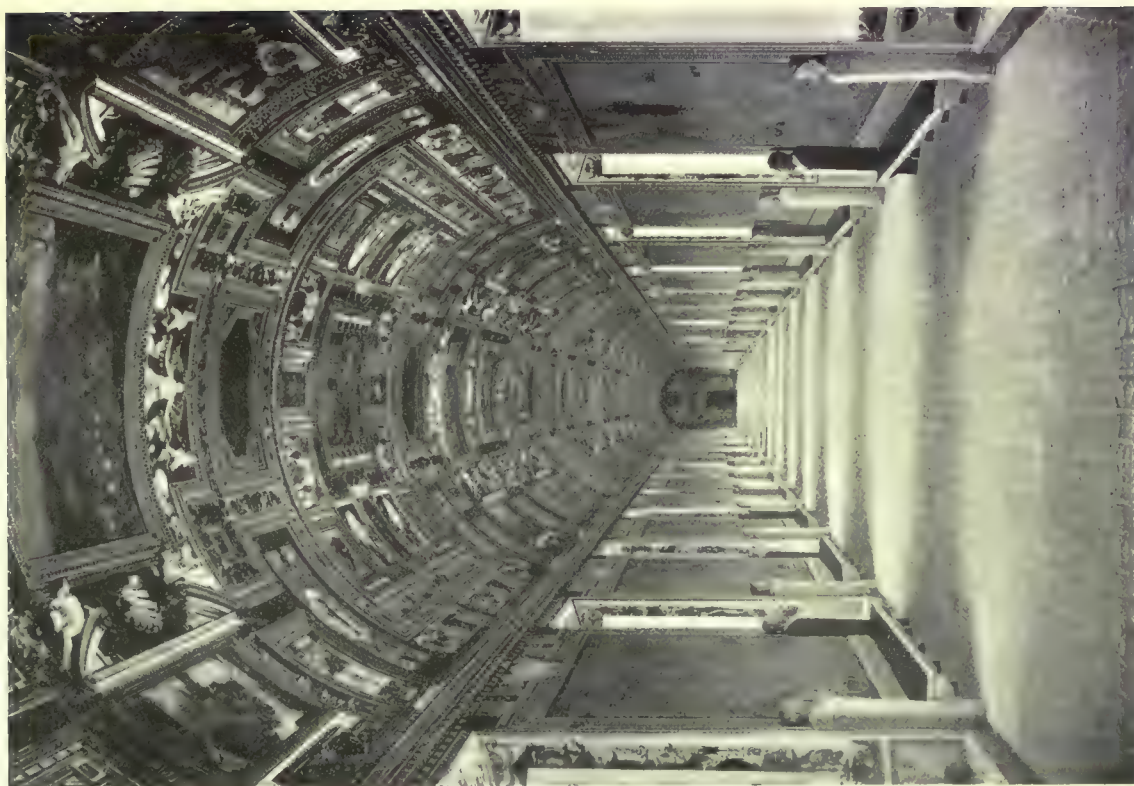


FIG. 36.—STUCCO-DURO OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE FROM THE  
LOGGIA OF THE VATICAN, ROME.

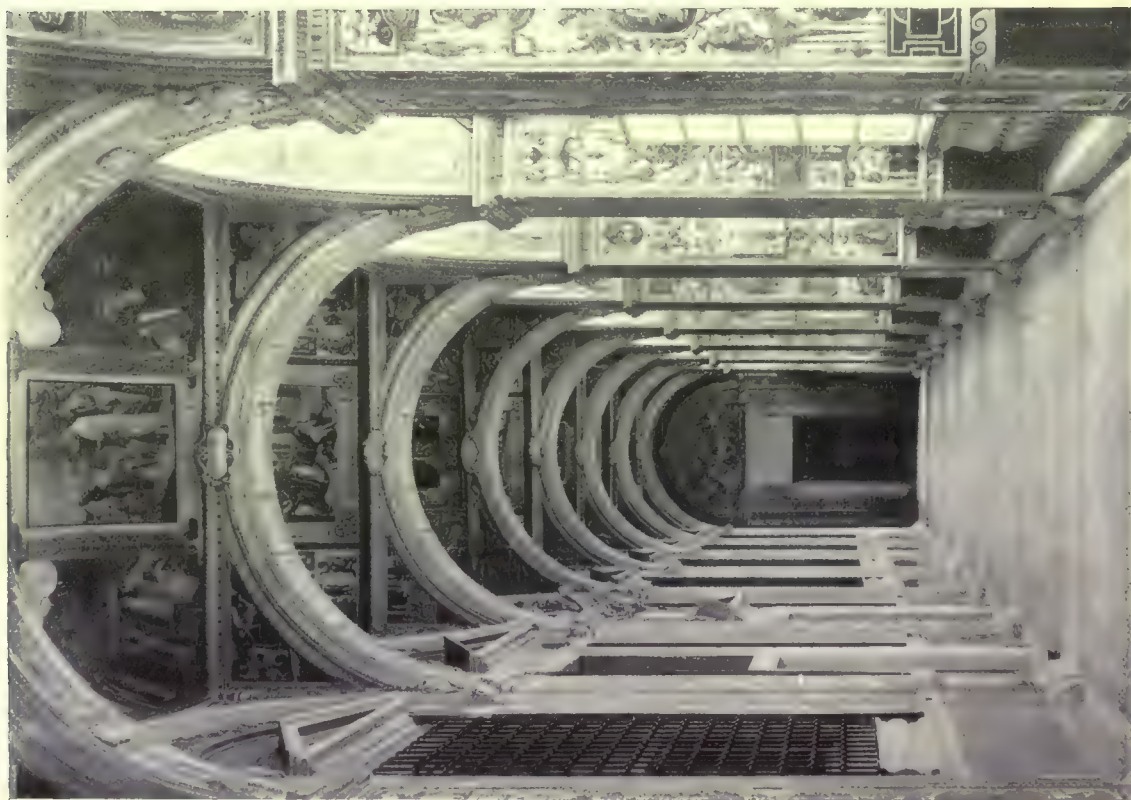


FIG. 35.—STUCCO-DURO OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE FROM THE  
LOGGIA OF THE VATICAN, ROME.

arabesque properly means the delicate, linear decoration which is seen in the capital letters and other illuminations of manuscripts executed during the twelfth and the three following centuries, "Grottesque" ought to mean work similar to that found in the ruins called by the Italians "grotte," at Rome; as appears from Varchi ("Lezioni," 4to, Florence, 1590, p. 216, and Borghini, "Riposo," 8vo, Florence, 1584, p. 492). Such work may be defined as ornament, neither mathematical (as a fret or a guilloche) nor conventional (as a patera or a honeysuckle), but based on actual or possible form, and varying in treatment from naturalism to conventionality: thus the subjects of pure grottesque work, whether painted or sculptured, are foliage, flowers, and fruit with stems and tendrils arbitrarily entwined, and formed into scrolls or otherwise employed, and mingled according to fancy with architectural features, animals, and fabulous or monstrous creations. So Wotton calls a terminal figure a piece of "grotesca" ("Elements," London, 1624).

It does not appear that this departure from conventional forms of ornament, although some Etruscan vases may show it, was generally practised until the time of Augustus. The invention of the new style is usually attributed to Lodius, but the attribution is due to a misreading of Pliny ("H. M." xxxv. 10).

Although it excited the wrath of Vitruvius, "De Architectura," vii. 5, whose expression, "Audacia Egyptiorum in pictura," has been thought to imply a belief that the Greeks founded the style on Alexandrian rather than Persian suggestions, the fashion spread rapidly, insomuch that most classic buildings after his time may be cited as furnishing specimens of grottesque decoration.

The style of the grotteschi seems to have disappeared until the dawn of the Renaissance. It was adopted by Ghiberti in 1400, and by his successors. If that be true, Vasari was clearly at fault when he said that Pietro Luzzo was the first to discover (c. 1500) and restore the kind of painting called arabesche and grottesche, while Giovanni Manni da Udine (1513-20) invented the stucco in which he executed in basso-relievo the grottesques in the loggie of the Vatican as assistant to Raphael, whose patronage of this class of decoration appears to have established its reputation. Soon after the death of Giulio Romano, 1546, the real grottesque was superseded by the grandiose decoration seen in the works of Le Pautre. Although Audran practised it at Chantilly, Meudon, and Sceaux, and some appearance of a return to it can be seen in the works of Bérain, Gillot, and Watteau, its true revival must be attributed to the discovery, during the lifetime of the Brothers Adam, of the Villa Negroni, and of Herculaneum. The application of this style of ornament, whether modelled or painted, to ceilings has furnished employment to many skilful artists who have either concealed (like Corregio) the variations of surface by painting, or covered plain surfaces with a profusion of flowing ornament, delicately modelled in stucco by hand.

The conclusion will be that the term arabesque as thus used has no connection with Arabic art, in which, in obedience to the Kôran, the imitation of God's own work is forbidden, and that it means nothing, in short, but extremely delicate and minute ornamentation.

Although Vitruvius (vii. 5) spoke with such scorn of the excess to which this system of representing impossibilities was carried, yet the finest examples



exist in the Thermæ of Titus at Rome, and on the walls of Pompeian houses ; the works of Raphael and his pupils in the loggie at the Vatican, and of Giulio Romano in the Palazzo del Té, at Mantua, may be cited as successful imitations of the antique practice.

*Arabesque*—(*It.* arabisco, *Sp.* arabesco, *Fr.* arabesque, *Gr.* arabeskelaubwerk).

The term in European languages is taken to mean the *grotesque* system of decoration ; produced either by chisel or brush, and taking as its objective almost everything under the sun. But the Accademia della Crusca explains the term arabesco as ornaments formed only of leaves and flowers, and for the most part



FIG. 37.—Portion of Apse from the Villa Madama, Rome.

drawn with a point, a definition that seems to point to the continuation in the arabesque of the practice of the illuminists.

To Giulio Romano and Penni fell the honour of completing works which had been commenced by Raphael. The "Vigna de Medici" at Rome was one of these, and here Giovanni da Udine allied himself with Giulio Romano in the execution of the stucco and painted decoration (Figs. 37-43).

Giulio Romano (1492-1546), chiefly a painter, was one of Raphael's assistants in the loggie of the Vatican. He assisted him also in the decoration of the apartments in the Torre Borgia, and in the loggia of Agostino Chigi. He also executed the paintings in the Great Hall of Constantine in the Vatican,



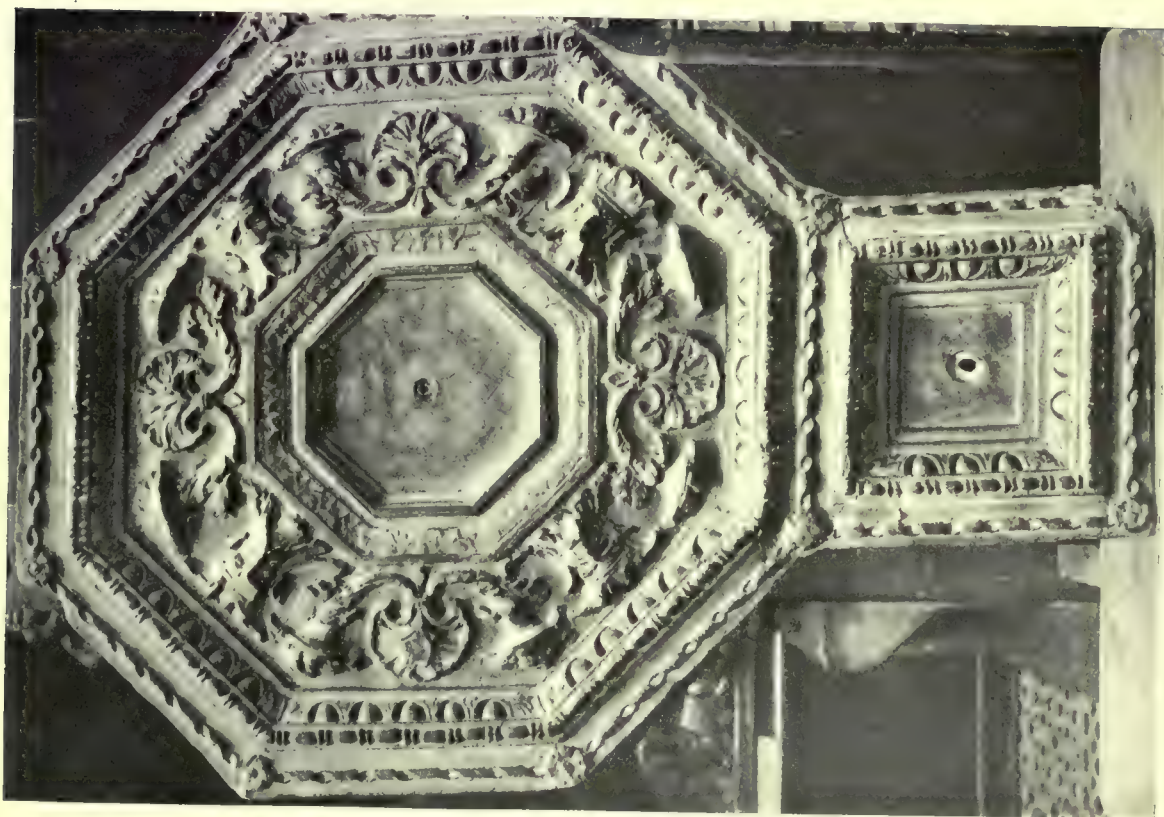


FIG. 38.

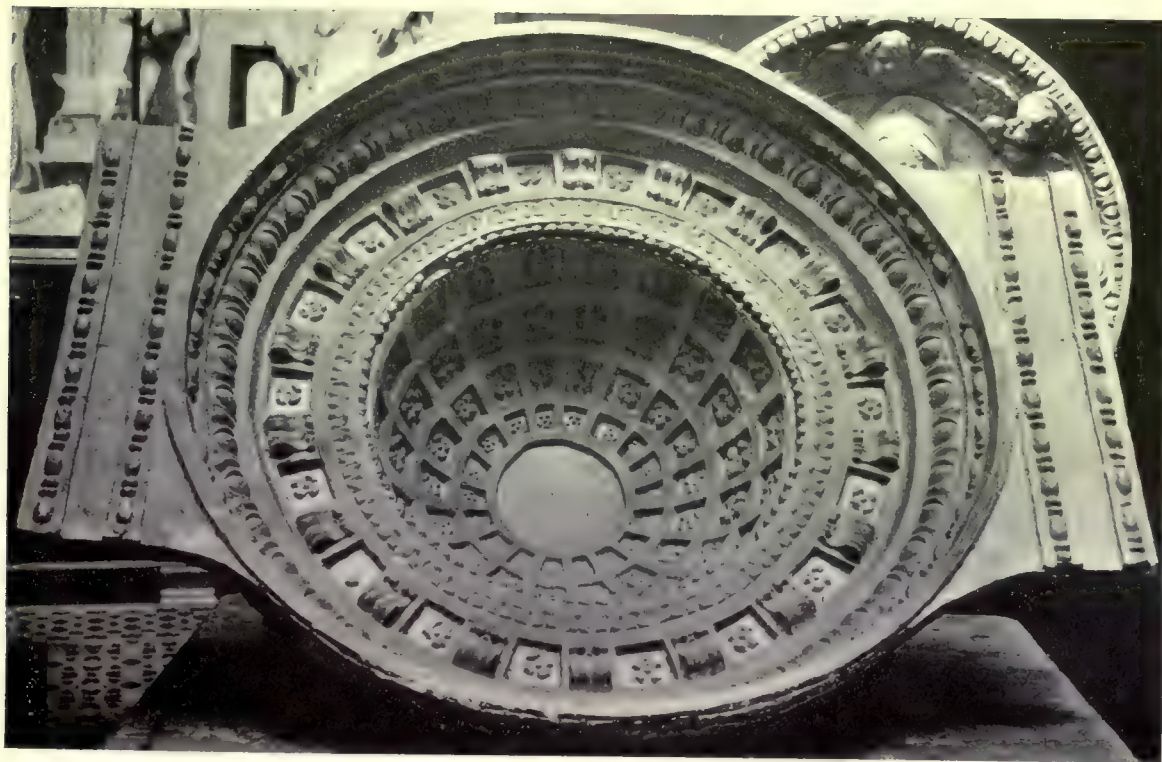
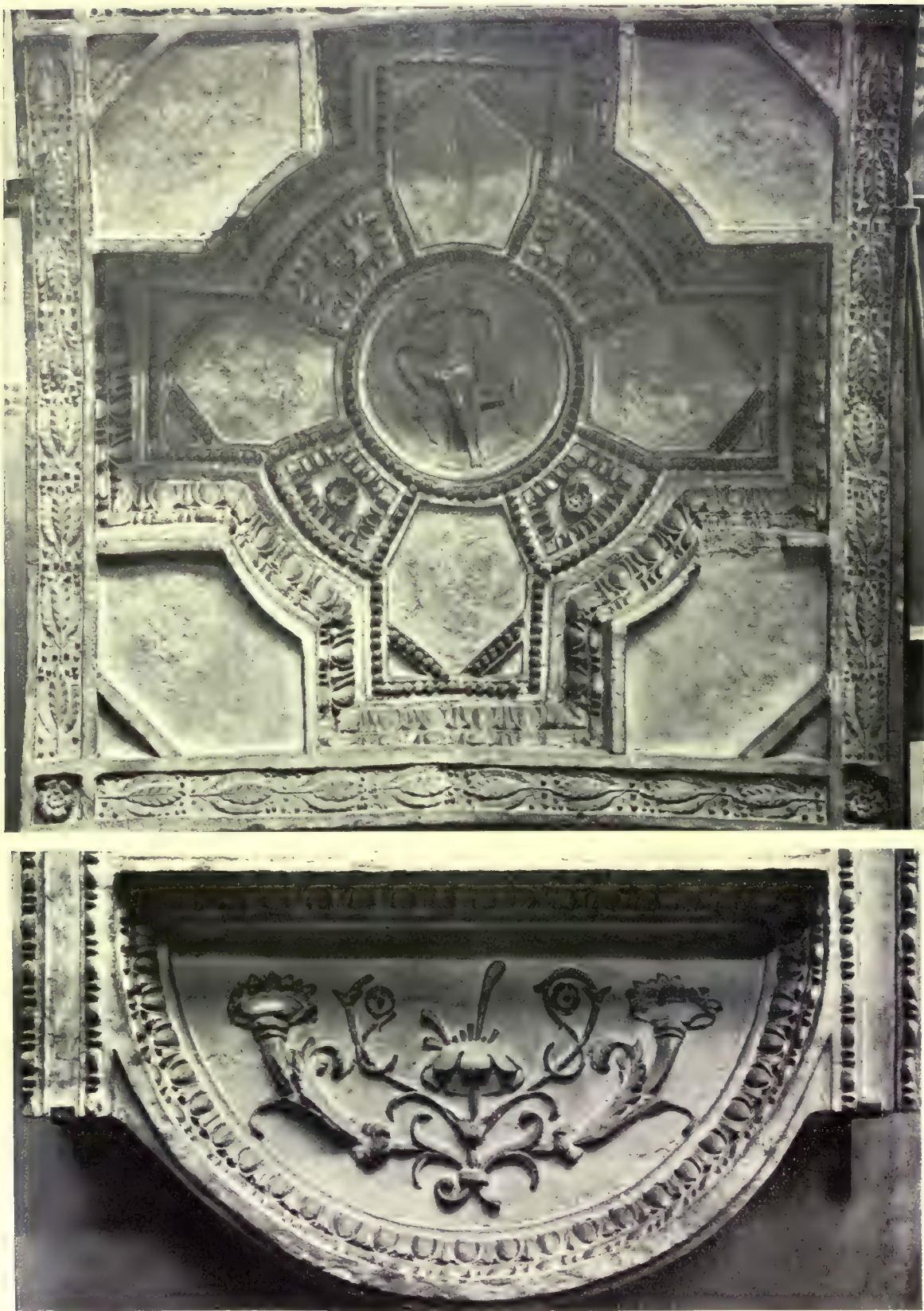


FIG. 39.

DETAILS FROM THE VILLA MADAMA, ROME.





FIGS. 40 and 41.—DETAILS FROM THE VILLA MADAMA, ROME.





FIG. 43.—STUCCO-DURO FROM THE VILLA MADAMA, ROME.

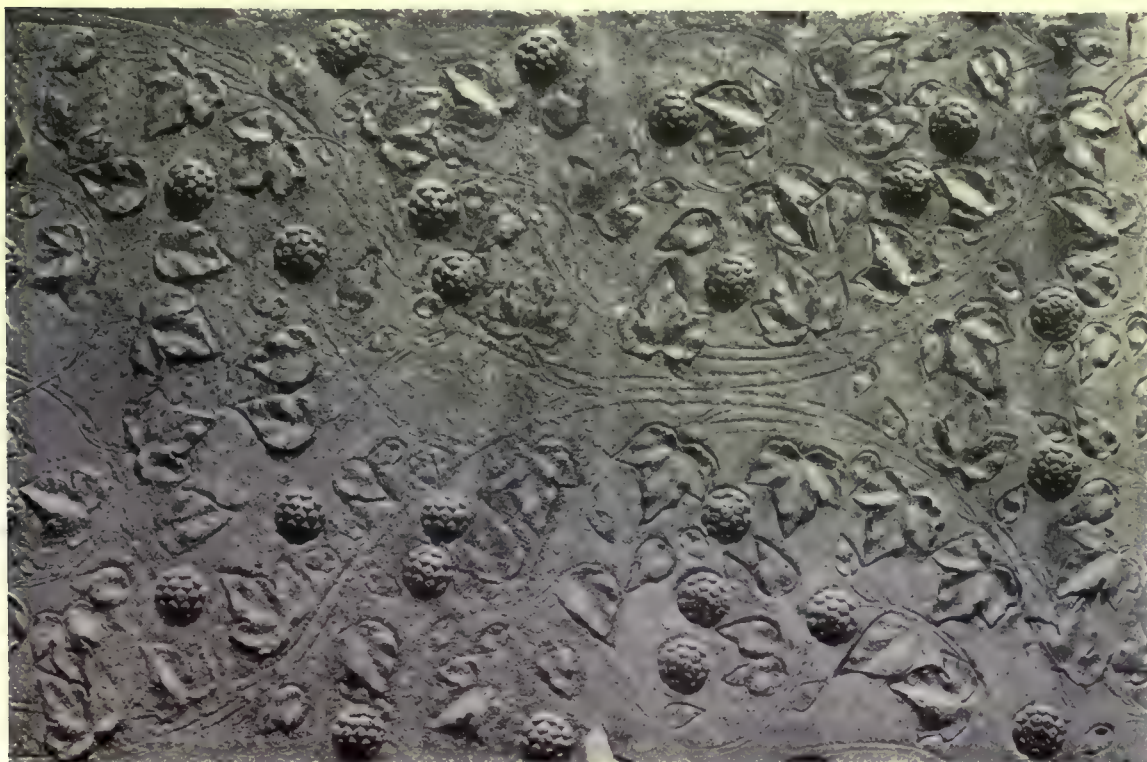


FIG. 42.—DETAIL OF PILASTER FROM THE VILLA MADAMA, ROME.



and his work in the Vigna de Medici which has been mentioned above consisted of paintings and garden decorations.\*

As the foremost worker in stucco of the Italian Renaissance, there is the following reference to him in Lanzi's "History of Painting:—"His place in this work is unique, for no other artist erected so many imposing and beautiful buildings, and adorned them with his own hands." His intimate connection with Raphael, and the immense quantity of work which he executed independently of the great master, render advisable, and indeed almost necessary, the inclusion of a somewhat detailed account of his travels and works, and a list of his chief buildings.

On the death of Pope Leo X., Giulio Romano went to Mantua (about 1524), where he obtained from the provinces all the stucco-workers he required, and formed an important school.

The following list, compiled from many different sources, may be regarded as fairly complete. His works include:—

In the Vatican, the *Trumpeters' apartments*, with the staircase for men and horses (since pulled down); the *Palazzo on Mount Janiculum for Bald. Turini of Pescia*, with its decorations, 1515; the *Palazzo Gio. Alberini*, Piazza de Bianchi (also

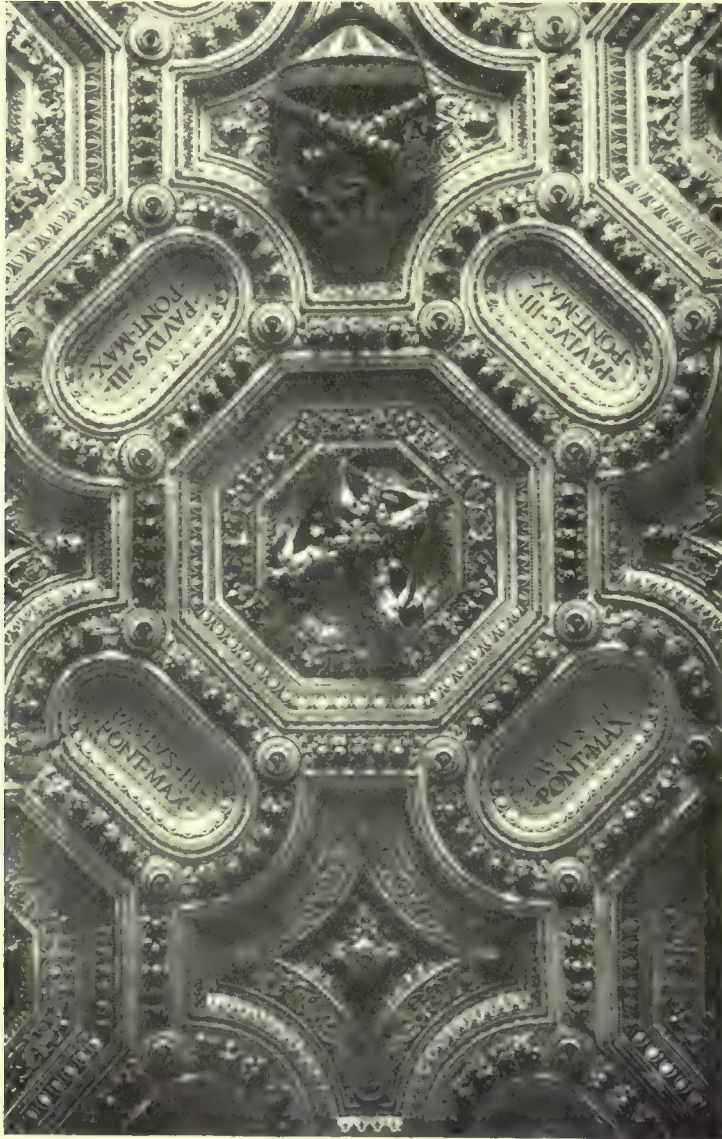


FIG. 44.—Detail of Vault of the Sala Reggia.

attributed to R. Sanzio); the *Palazzo Occiaporci*, via del Banco di S. Spirito, Rome, 1535; *Palazzo for Pain Stagi*, Piazza Dogana, afterwards Cenci Ferrerio; a house

\* Gruner, "Fresco Decorations," London, 1884, text, p. 33; also Percier and Fontaine, "Maisons de Plaisance," Paris, 1809.

for himself at the corner of Macello di Corbi; the *Church of Sta. Maria dell' Orto*, in the Trastevere, Rome (the façade by M. Lunghi); and the *Palazzo*, now Lanti, on the Pietro Montario.

In 1524 he went to Mantua, where he did work at the Palazzo del Té, or The (said to be short for Tejetto or The-yeto, a canal). Availing himself of the old walls, he designed the first entrance hall with the series of apartments on each side. In 1528-30 he transformed the palazzo, with a vaulted apartment, 30 feet in diameter, and added the decorations: it was restored 1783 by P. Pozzi of Mantova. The plan, &c., is given in Gruner, "Fresco Decorations," and illustrations in Waring and Macquoid, "Architectural Art," Plates 49, 50.

In the Duke Gonzaga's palace at Mantua, Giulio reconstructed many rooms, with two very broad spiral staircases, altered and continued by Primaticcio. He also designed another palace for the Duke at Marmiruolo; and the decorations at the entry into Mantua, 1530, of the Emperor Charles V. for Sigismund in 1550, with other entertainments. For that city Giulio made numerous designs for chapels, façades for palaces, gardens, prepared a complete scheme for its drainage, &c., and for relief from inundations of the river; repaired the Church of S. Benedetto of the Carsinissi Monks, and rebuilt the dome. In addition, he constructed in Mantua a house for himself



FIG. 45.—Portion of the Scala d'Oro, Ducal Palace, Venice.



(restored 1800 for L. Mambrini by P. Pozzi); and opposite it the Palazzo Collerido via Larga (carried out by G. B. Ghisi); the palazzo (since rebuilt) for the Marchese Toretti, and the Duomo at Mantua, completed by G. B. Ghisi.

In 1529 he designed the tomb of Balt. Castiglione in the choir of Sta. Maria del Grazie, and that of Pietro Strozzi in the Basilica of Sta. Andrea.

Not long after he visited Bologna with Tofano Lombardeno, made a design in competition for the façade of S. Petronio, and was consulted on the proposed

exterior to be given to the basilica at Vicenza. He also designed the tomb of Cludio Rangoni, Count of Castelvetro, in Modena Cathedral, and that of his mother, Lucia Rusca Rangoni, and was consulted on the works of Milan Cathedral in 1541. Giulio died at Mantua of fever, on the 1st February 1546, aged fifty-three years, and was buried in the Church of Sta. Barnaba; his epitaph is given in Vasari's "Lives." A portrait by himself was in Kensington Palace, according to a note in Pyne's "Royal Residences." Among his best pupils, besides those already mentioned, were:—G. B. Paggi of Pescia, F. Primaticcio, Rinaldo and Giovan Battista of Mantua, Giandel Lione, Rafdal Collie of Borgo, Figurino of Faerza (or Marc Antonio Rocchetti),



FIG. 46.—Detail of Stucco-Duro Decoration from the Palace of Fontainebleau.

Giulio Tordiozzi, and Jermo Guizoni, while G. B. Ghisi completed the unfinished edifices.

*Giovanni*, after completing his work in Rome, went to Florence, thence to Venice, afterwards to his own country of Udine, and ultimately (in disguise) back to Rome, where he was found by Vasari and brought to the Pope Pius IV., who received and gave him a pension, and employed him upon the upper loggia of the Vatican, and in the repair of damage done between the time of his flight



from Rome and his return. He died in 1561. With the fall of Rome, in 1527, and the dispersal of the papal court, this band of artists and stucco modellers in Rome was broken up and dispersed. Giovanni, robbed and tortured, escaped to Friuli; but the art of the stucco modeller was continued elsewhere; at Venice, under Sansovino, and Mantua, under Giulio Romano.

*Pierini del Vaga* (1500-1547), one of Raphael's assistants, went to Genoa, where he founded a school of stuccatori which remained and prospered, but he himself returned to Rome later, where he again decorated various rooms in the Vatican. Many other artists likewise returned.

*Sansovino*, architect and sculptor, went to Venice where he ultimately founded a school which still exists, I believe. A pupil of his was Alessandro Vittoria



FIG. 47.—La Galerie d'Apollon, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

(1525-1608), whose work in the Scala d'Oro of the Ducal Palace I am able to show (Fig. 45).

*Ricciarelli* (*Daniello*) of Volterra, born *cir.* 1491, was chiefly a painter, stuccoist, and sculptor. He became a pupil of B. Peruzzi, and was sent by Michael Angelo to act as overseer at S. Pietro at Rome, but, instead of employing him, the commissioners appointed Nanni de Baccio Bigio (Vasari, "Lives," edit. 1851-52, iv. 115; v. 162-179, 330, 337). He died 4th April 1566, aged fifty-seven, as stated.

*Ricciarelli* (*Lionardo*), nephew of the above, was also a celebrated stuccoist (Vasari, "Lives," edit. 1852, v. 174-175).

*Ricamatore* (*Giovanni*), usually known as Giov. da Udine and G. de Manni,

and Il Ricamatori, Giov. Recamador, and (1534) G. de Ricamatori, also a painter and stuccoist, born 27th October 1487 at Udine, was son of Francesco. He studied at Venice under Giorgione da Castel Franco, spent some years in Rome in Raphael's studio, was with him at the time of the discovery of the arabesques at the Baths of Titus which he carefully studied, and discovered the manner of making the stucco. He decorated the loggie of the Vatican with similar works which are

shown in the engravings of Santi Bartoli, Volpato, and Ottaviani.

He also decorated other palaces at Rome and Florence, and designed a few unimportant works. He died in 1564 (Maniago, "*Storia Friuliani*," 8vo, Udine, 1823, pp. 110-123, 154, 241, 364; Maniago, "*Guida da Udine*," 8vo, San Vito, 1840, pp. 20, 22, 26, 38, 47, 53, 64, 101, 104; Vasari, "*Lives*," 8vo, Lond., 1852, v. 16-32).

*Vittoria* (*Alessandro*), also called A. Victorias, best known as a sculptor, born in 1525 at Trento, was sent by his father to Venice to study drawing under Sansovino, where in 1553 he completed his master's church, and the high altar of S. Giuliano, and designed the Church (or the façade at least) of S. Zaccaria (attributed to A. di Marco); and the statue (1595) of the



FIG. 48.—Galerie des Glaces, Versailles.

saint over the entrance is his. In 1571 he designed the chapel and altar of the Rosaria in the Church of SS. Giovanni Paulo, with its sculpture and stucco-work; the Scuolo, or Oratorio di S. Girolamo in S. Fantino (now the Atenei Veneto), with its bronze and marble statues; the principal part of the façade of the Scuola



Franco Quattore Poiti the statues and stucco-work of the Scala d'Oro (Fig. 45), from Palladio's design; and that of the Aquittimo, and the Pozzi in the cortile. In addition he executed various works in the Churches of S. Rocco, S. Sebastiano, S. Francesco della Vigna; the tombs of Priuli in S. Salvatore, and various bronze candelabri in S. Stefano; also, 1582-90, the fine but unsatisfactory Palazzo Balbi near the canal. His works are to be seen at Padua, Treirgi, Brescia, Verona, and Trau. *Silvatico* attributes many sculptures at Venice to him ("Venezia," 8vo, Ven., 1847, pp. 384-395 and 507). He died 27th March 1608, aged eighty-three, while at work on the Palazzo Balbi, and was buried in the Church of S. Zaccaria, where his tomb, designed and partly executed by himself, is on the right of the door leading into the sanctuary, inscribed "A. V. qui vivens vivos duxit E marmore Vultus" (Temaza, "Vite," 4to, Roma, 1778, pp. 475-498). In Parma, also, much of his stucco exists, and in nearly every Italian city.

Amongst the stucco-workers with Giulio Romano in Mantua was the young artist Primaticcio, a native of Bologna, who for six years worked with Giulio Romano, achieving great fame as colourist and modeller.

With him, perhaps, we are most interested, as it was he whom Francis I. of France invited to work at Fontainebleau. There he went in 1531, and soon became chief superintendent of works. Great as its interest is, it is not proposed to trace the development of French plasterwork from its beginning, for it would require a separate treatise, but nevertheless room must be found for a note on the work of this artist, since it formed a link between Italy and France, and must therefore have been one of the channels through which the stream of the Renaissance reached England.



FIG. 49.—External Stucco-Duro from the Palazzo Podesta, Genoa. Erected 1563.



It has been said that Primaticcio was the first to execute stucco in France, but since he went there in 1531, and there is stucco-work of still earlier date in the valley of the Seine (at Gros Horloge, Rouen, and Manoir de Yville-sur-Seine, Toulouse, and elsewhere), this cannot be quite correct.

Primaticcio was, however, the first to execute works of importance and value in France, but his best was destroyed in 1738 to make way for certain additions. He worked at Fontainebleau during a period of forty years, and died in Paris in 1570 (Fig. 46). His work greatly influenced that of Jean Goujon, Jean Bulars, Germain Pilon, and Jean Cousin, and the French school of sculpture of the mid-sixteenth century. The French architects and sculptors (plasterers) of the time of Henri II. (1547-1559) were as follows:—

	Sculptors.	Architects.
French School.	Jean Goujon.	Du Cerceau.
	Jean Bulars.	Boccador (Italian School).
	Jean Cousin.	Philibert de l'Orme.
	Germain Pilon.	

Primaticcio's work at Fontainebleau greatly influenced the work of this country, but was not confined to Fontainebleau, for many notable buildings in France contain a great deal of it (Figs. 47, 48).

Francis I. had a rival and contemporary in King Henry VIII. of England, who would be behind him in nothing, and introduced the new art into England.

An excellent example of exterior Italian stucco decoration is shown in Fig. 49, the Palazzo Podesta, Genoa.

## CHAPTER IV.

## SGRAFFITO OR SCRATCHED ORNAMENT.

THE term is derived from the Italian *graffiato*, *sgraffiato*, or *sgraffito*, used for scratch-work, hatching, black and white work, and the *chiaroscuro* of the writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Figs. 50, 51). It is described by a French author in 1770 as a sort of black and white fresco, which is called "*manière égratignée*." This system of plastic decoration was rediscovered at the time of the exhumations previously alluded to of the Baths of Titus by Pietro Luggo, and revived by him and Andrea Feltrini, who covered the fronts of buildings with an *intonaco* of black plaster, which, while in a fresh condition, was covered with a white stucco, to which cartoons were transferred, and then the outline was hatched over with a graving-iron so as to expose the coating of black underneath. "The whole work," he has told us, "was then gone over with a black or darkly-tinted water colour, in very fluid condition."

The term is applied moreover to scratched or incised decoration upon potters' clay whilst still soft. The first façade done in this manner in Florence by Di Cosimo was that of the Palazzo Gondi in the Borgo Ognissanti; the next an elaborate one on Lung' Arno near the bridge of the Trinità; and a third for A. and T. Sertini near the Church of S. Michele was in a grander, more varied manner.

Vasari (iv., p. 85) mentions that Perino del Vaga executed the front of the house of the Marchesa de Massa near that of Meastro Pasguino, Florence, in *chiaroscuro* after the manner of Polidoro and Maturino.

Neither Vasari nor Bossi describe any earlier works, but a case in the Victoria and Albert Museum is full of specimens of *sgraffito* pottery, Italian in character, and of fifteenth-century workmanship. Probably mural decoration in this manner followed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Next come Polidoro da Caravaggio and Maturino, with their *sgraffito* in Rome, executed before 1526, and Piles, in the "*Art of Painting*" (8vo, London, 1754, pp. 123-126), mentions Cosimo, D. Beccafumi, and Giovanni da Udini as artists who worked in this manner. Morto da Feltro in arabesque and grottesche was master of Cosimo. (Twentieth Report, containing description of *sgraffito* process, 8vo, London, 1873; A. S. Cole on *Sgraffito*, read at R.I.B.A., Sessional papers 10, March 1873, p. 127.)



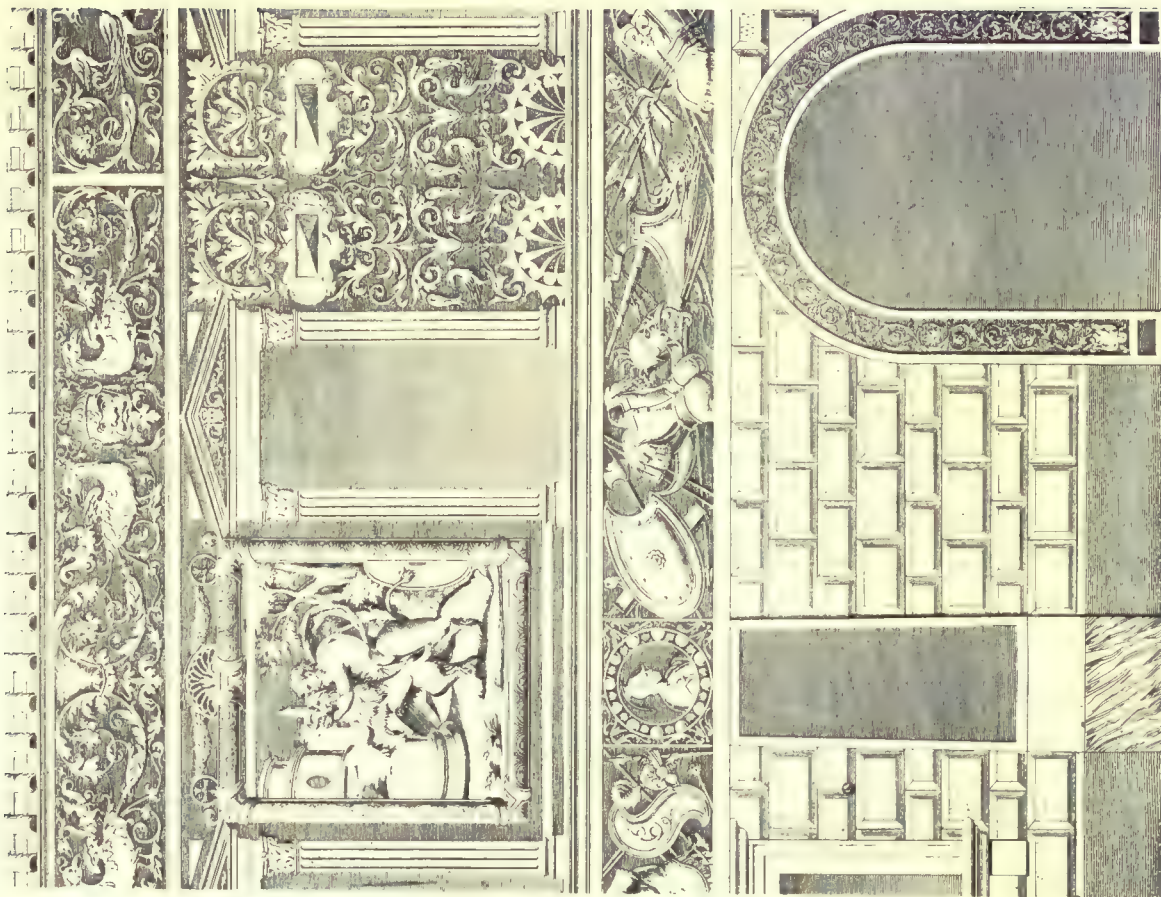


FIG. 51.—SGRAFFITO IN THE VIA S. MATTEO IN MERULANA, ROME.

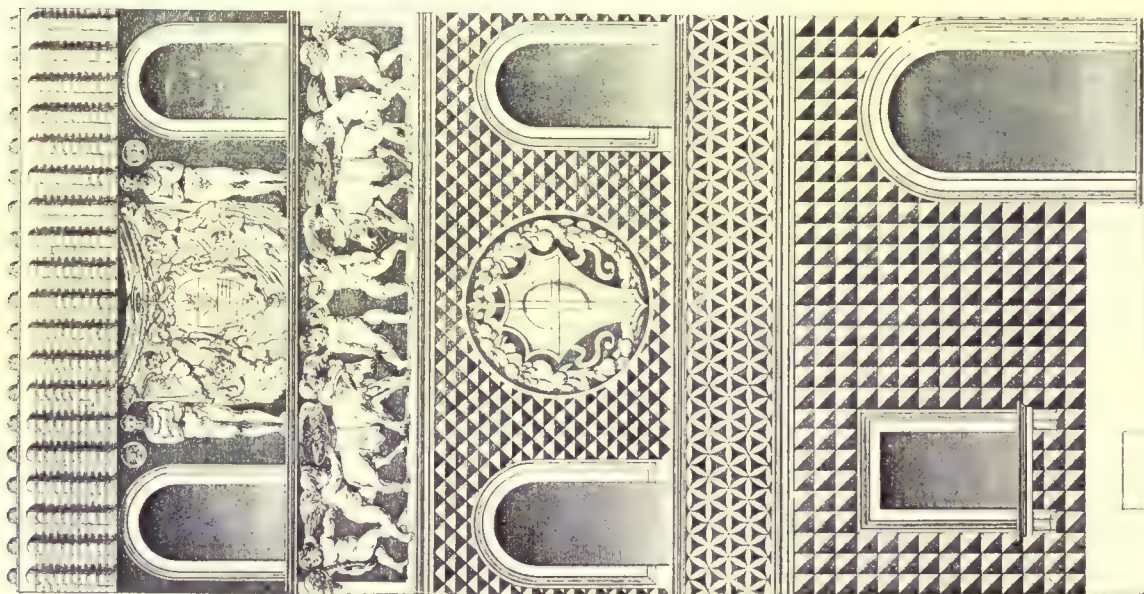


FIG. 50.—SGRAFFITO IN THE VIA TOMACELLI, ROME.

At Spoleto, near the cathedral, is a large palace covered with designs attributed to Julio Romano.

Letarouilly, in "Rome Moderne," Plate 110, gives a façade of the sixteenth century in the Vicolo de' Matricciani.

There is sgraffito at Pisa on the façade of the Palazzo Conventuale of the order of S. Stefano, by Forzori (Illustrations 4, 5, 6, 25). Further investigation into the origin and history of the evolution of this kind of work from the scratching of primitive beings would be out of place in a technical treatise, and had better be undertaken by an archæologist than by a practical worker, for what we are immediately concerned with is the practice of artists and craftsmen.

Cosimo, who profited by the discoveries of his master, Morto da Feltro, found scope for his talent in Florence, where much of the mural decoration is either his work or his pupils', or, when the date of it is later, can be traced to his influence clearly.

So sgraffito, with the contemporary art of modelling in stucco-duro, or white stucco, spread from Italy throughout Europe, and reached England, as we have seen, in the reign of Henry VIII.

There was much sgraffito in the king's palace called "Nonesuch," at Hampton Court, and in other places, where it was executed in the common "parge" of the native workmen.

In Chapter VII. it will be explained that the ornamentation was incised on a finished, smooth, flat surface; a mode of working resembling, though infinitely superior to, "stencilling," as it is practised at present.

This elementary form of sculpture, or engraving as we might call it, though unlike the contemporary work of the stuccotori, was equally legitimate, and not inferior to it in the two qualities of beauty and durability.

But, where colour was added, it seems to have been at a disadvantage compared with the other, owing to the loss of that freedom which should be felt in art—a loss attributable to the necessity of preparing and transferring cartoons (excepting in the case of the employment of discoloured or black and white plasters).

On the other hand, it was eminently fitted "for its place, and was done *in* its place." It put the artist in direct communication with the surface to be decorated, and gave him that familiarity with oftentimes untoward circumstances which breeds not contempt of the medium but the kindest feeling for it, and he who has this to the full will hereafter be known as a Master.

Sgraffito must now be described from the craftsman's or executant's point of view. While proceeding from stage to stage there are certain precautions to take.

Given an ordinary interior brick wall to be decorated in this manner:—as in all other things, ordinary precaution and foresight is necessary in order to avoid any possible risk of failure, or unnecessary waste of labour. First, examine the sub-surface thoroughly, for the wall may be damp, or built of indifferently baked bricks, or of porous materials. The damp may arise from defective "pointing," from the lack of a damp-course, or contact with badly placed, or defective rain-water pipes, from stoppage, from conjunction with a bank of earth, or with wet and improperly drained foundations. Whatever the cause it must be removed or cured.



No wall decoration can be regarded as permanent unless a dry wall is assured. Each particular case has its remedy. "Repointing" with Portland cement is a simple means, removing the earth-bank against the wall, entrenching or draining the foundation below the level of the footings, or, in the case of porous materials, lining the wall inside with tiling, as shown in Fig. 52, will be found effective and economical.

The author has met the difficulty by lining the inside of the walls with ordinary flat, well-made roofing tiles, bedded in cement and ventilated in this manner :—



FIG. 52.—Plan of Ventilating (Tile and Plaster) Lining to Interior of Damp Walls.

The nibs at top of the tiles are knocked off, and as many tiles as are required for the purpose are cut in half lengthwise, and bedded on the wall in cement, in vertical strips, at intervals wide enough apart to receive the whole tiles lapping over them, with a dab of cement down each edge; thus a ventilating space is formed by each row of tiles, and the coating of plaster or stucco is applied to this foundation. This system has the advantage of reducing the thickness of the wall lining to the utmost, and has proved successful in serious cases. It is also much less expensive than building a  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch brick wall with a ventilating space at back.

Portland cement for sgraffito coatings must *not* be fresh from the kiln, otherwise shrinkage may occur which will cause cracks, and cracks may cause other mischief of a serious kind.

The external application of silicate washes to the surface of damp walls of porous stone, or brick, has been effective in many cases, whilst in others an external coating of stucco has remedied the defect.

If the wall is new, the joints should be "pointed," and whether new or old, they must be raked clear, and swept clean of mortar and dust that would otherwise absorb moisture from the first coarse coat which was applied, and make it less adhesive. But where this is done, the wall should be thoroughly saturated with water, and allowed to hold as much moisture as will effectively stop the suction of the walling material.

Unless this be attended to, there is great danger of the cement in the coating material drying like mud, instead of properly and naturally setting.

The first coating should be gauged in the proportion of one part Portland cement to three parts of sharp, clean, well-washed coarse sand, thoroughly turned over and mixed together to ensure equal strength throughout its setting and drying.

Portland cement, obtained from the best makers only, should be used, and it must *not* be fresh from the kiln, for cracks will surely appear if it is, especially if the cement is applied to an uneven surface.



MODERN SGRAFFITO DECORATION. BY HEYWOOD SUMNER.

FIG. 54.—From South Wall of All Saints' Church, Ennismore Gardens, London.



FIG. 53.—From North Wall of Chancel of St Paul's Church, Winchester.



Imperfect adherence of the coarse coating (the first coat) to the wall must arise from one of two causes mentioned, viz., either the inadequate cleaning of the mortar joints, or insufficient saturation by moisture. This first coating must be carefully tapped and sounded, and any defective portion cut out with a sharp

chisel, and made good as before mentioned.

Great care must be taken with this first coarse coating, to ensure a good "key," by "scouring" and "roughing up" sufficiently to give a good hold for the succeeding coatings.

The first coat should be put on some days before setting to work on the following ones, which are to receive the decoration.

This done, and all being sound and well set, a general survey of the wall surface to be decorated should be made, and the most convenient starting place decided on.

It should also be considered in

connection with the scheme of decoration which has been decided upon, and a calculation will have to be made as to *how much* of the surface can be worked on with comfort, so that about the same amount of time may be devoted to the colour coat, and the following-on coat with the final surface coat. The reason is obvious; for should the colour coat set hard before the final coat is put on, the



FIG. 55.—The Apse, St Agatha's, Portsmouth, by Heywood Sumner.

colour will never have its full strength of tone where the cutting through of the decorative coat has exposed it to view.

The wall having been spaced out to suit the scheme of decoration, and general convenience of working, it should again be saturated with moisture, and the second coat containing the desired colouring applied with the same care as the first, in the matter of mixing and roughing up.

This second, or colour coating, may best be gauged in the proportion of one part of old Portland cement, one part of sifted silver sand, and one part of distemper colour—by preference. The ochres and umbers, Turkey red, Indian



FIG. 56.—Arch from St John's, Miles Platting, Manchester, by Heywood Sumner.

red, lime-blue, or ochre and lime-blue for green, oxide of manganese for black, &c., may all be regarded as safe and reliable colouring matter.

A little ochre in the lime-blue will regulate the violet tendency.

Lime-blue is apt to set more quickly than the other colours above mentioned, and some allowance for this should be made in the working of portions where it is used.

The third coating, which is the last, may be safely and expediently applied as soon as the preceding one is sufficiently firm to receive it, but not until the gloss has disappeared from its surface.

When this is floated on, and trowelled over, the decoration must be scratched on as quickly as possible, before the plaster has time to set, and here, as in



other crafts, is the dividing line between the artist and the artisan; between experience and inexperience. Mistakes must occur, of which the artist should take advantage, and turn them to good account in this as in other media.

Then, as in other crafts, comes the artist's examination of his material, and the questions he asks himself are:—What is the best form of design for this purpose? Shall this colour coat or another be the predominant one?

Modes of procedure which have been practised for centuries may be safely resorted to again, modified according to circumstances, and allowed to depend not a little upon the individuality of the executant; such, for instance, as Heywood Sumner by whose permission the accompanying plates are published (Figs. 53-56). Mr Sumner's work, as all know, is at once sound and refined, and, in its general effect, delightful. By means of the paper which he contributed to the catalogue of the first exhibition of the "Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society," he was one of the first to direct the attention of decorative artists to the excellence of sgraffito where there is plaster: to him in great measure, and the late Mr G. T. Robinson, its revival in England is due.

After the authorities at South Kensington had experimented on the walls of the New College, it required no further advertisement, and it is good to know that the sgraffito there has in no way suffered from exposure to the variations of the English climate.

CHAPTER V.  
STUCCO-DURO IN ENGLAND.

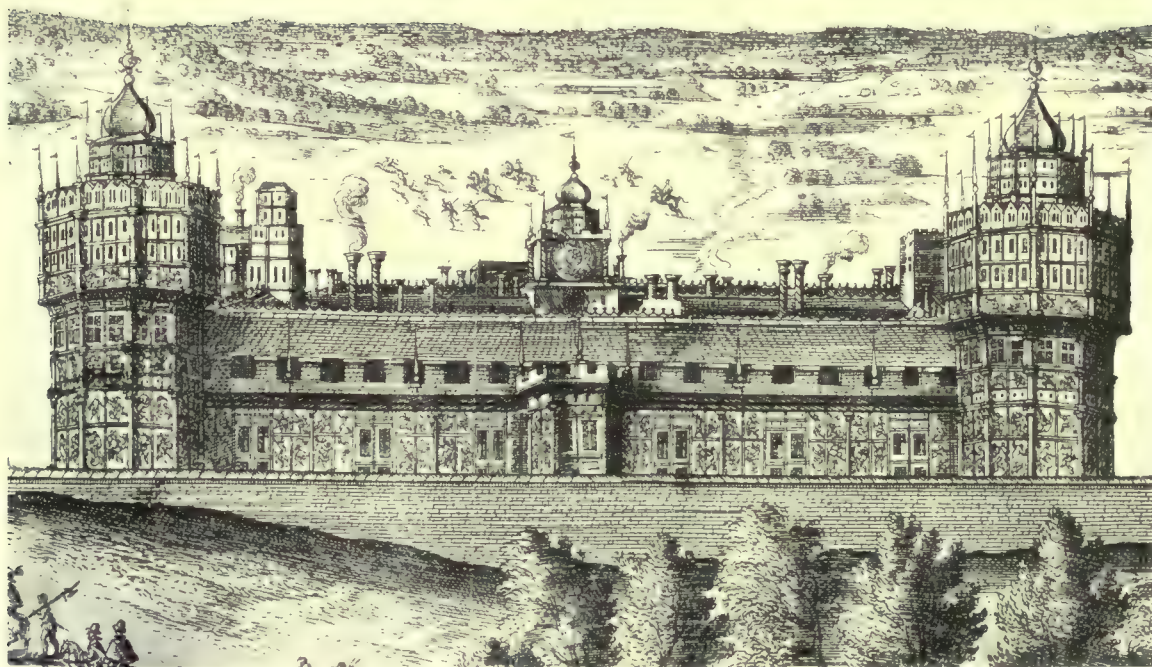


FIG. 57.—Nonesuch Palace, from Hoefnagel's Engraving.

THE art of the stuccoist was brought into England about 1538 when the royal palace of "Nonesuch" was built. (It stood on the hills between Epsom and Cheam, conveniently near to Hampton Court.)

We can form an idea of what it was like from the accounts of those who had seen it, and Mr Reginald Blomfield, A.R.A., availing himself of them, has an excellent description of it in his "Short History of the Renaissance in England." Braun tells us that the King "procured many artificers, architects, sculptors, and statuaries—Italian, French, and Dutch, as well as natives—who applied to the ornament of the mansion the finest and most curious skill they possessed in their arts."



*Hentzner*, a German visitor in 1598, said: "One would imagine everything that architecture could perform to have been employed on this work. There are everywhere statues that seem to breathe, so many casts that seem to rival the perfection of Roman antiquity that it may well claim and justify its name 'Nonesuch,' being without an equal."

The Duke of Saxe-Weimar, who visited the palace in 1613, must have been struck by the sculpture there, and thus briefly described what he saw: "The labours of Hercules were set forth on the King's side, the Queen's side exhibiting all kinds of heathen stories with naked figures."

Pepys saw the ruins of the palace after the Parliamentary wars. When, on 21st September 1665, the Great Plague drove the Exchequer to seek refuge in its ruins, he left this record of his impressions: "All the house on the outside is filled with figures of stories, and good paintings of Rubens' or Holbein's doing, and one great thing is that most of the house is covered—I mean the posts and quarters of the walls—with lead, gilded."

In 1666, the year of the Great Fire, we find John Evelyn there. He says: "I took an exact view of the plaster statues and bas-relievos inserted between the puncheons of the inside walls of the court, which must have been the work of some celebrated Italian. I much admired how it had lasted so well and entire from the time of Henry VIII., exposed as they are to the air, and pity it is they are not taken out and placed in some dry place—a gallery would much become them. They are *mezzo-relievos* the size of life. The story is of heathen gods, emblems, and compartments."

Henry VIII. died in 1547 before the palace was completed. Henry, Earl of Arundel, the instigator of this work, and director of art to the King, purchased it from Queen Mary, and "for the love he bare to his olde maister . . . did not leave till he had fully finished it."

Nonesuch Palace was frequently visited by Queen Elizabeth, but not so by James I. During Charles I.'s reign it was neglected, and then sacked and pillaged by Cromwell, given away by Charles II. to a mistress, and by her sold.

In James II.'s reign enough of it remained to be noticed and described by P. le Neve, Norroy King-at-Arms, in his copy of Aubrey's "Surrey" as being "done with plasterwork made of rye dough very costly."

This is the last account of the first monument of the stuccoists' art in England.

There is a general view of the building, engraved by Hoefnagel in 1582 (Fig. 57). Speed's map of Surrey, engraved in 1610, has a portion of the building in one corner. Both illustrations give an idea of the stucco reliefs, occupying the panels between the timber framings, but the written descriptions which we have quoted are of more value than the illustrations.

To better realise the kind of work that must have existed here, one has only to refer to the contemporary stucco-work done at Fontainebleau, by Primaticcio and his assistants, for Francis the First of France, of whom Henry VIII. was a jealous rival.

The stucco-work at Fontainebleau and other French palaces of the time cannot

be too highly praised, nor can it fail to give some idea of the splendour of the coloured stuccoes and gilded framings at Nonesuch.

It is much to be regretted that John Evelyn's suggestion for preserving these mezzo-relievos in some dry place or gallery was not adopted, for had this been done we might perhaps have been able to boast of a still living school of stuccotori in England.

The work appears to have been done under the direction of Toto del Nunziata—"Antony Toto" in our records—a fellow pupil with Pierino del Vaga in a Florentine studio, where the making of religious images of coloured wax seems to have been the chief business. Toto was made "sergeant painter" to the King in 1539—



FIG. 58.—Hardwick Old Hall, Derbyshire. Overmantel on Walls of Ruins of Giants' Chamber.

one year after the palace was commenced. (The term "sergeant-painter" then covered all the arts almost.) Pierino del Vaga combined stucco-work with his painting, and as Toto doubtless did likewise, there is but little to choose between them.

Very little is known of Toto in England apart from his work at "Nonesuch" which was a great undertaking.

Among the assistants there were Nicholas of Modena, a modeller who had worked with Primaticcio at Fontainebleau in 1533; Lucca and Bartolomeo Perini, the brothers of Giovanni Francesco Perini, and joint-legatee with Giulio Romano of Raphael's unfinished work.



Girolamo de Trevisa, known in the English accounts as Jerome of Trevisa, from Bologna, where he did much, was employed by Henry VIII.; in all probability at Nonesuch. Upon his death in 1544, John of Padua, an architect, became "Deviser of His Majesty's Buildings."

Apart from these we have the names of other Italian stucco-modellers who came to England between 1547 and 1600, and probably helped in the completion of the decoration at Nonesuch, besides working at Longleat, and at Hardwick in the old hall.



FIG. 59.

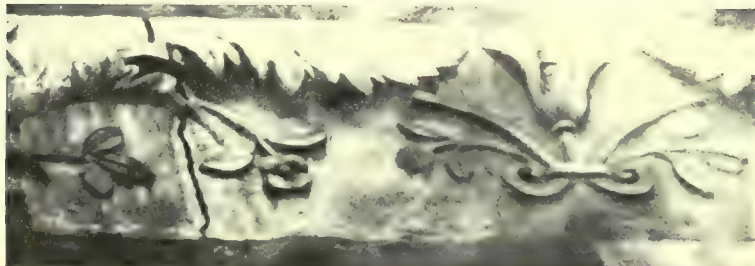


FIG. 60.

Hardwick Old Hall, Derbyshire. Stucco-Duro Frieze Decoration, from Ruins.

De Rudofi worked in England in 1550, also G. Nanni in 1564, Lionardo Ricciarelli in 1570, and Luca Romano in 1586. In the time of Edward VI. the English plasterer had pretty well learned from these foreigners the art of working in stucco, and earned his 11d. a day, whilst his brother painter received only 6d., or when lucky a penny more.

In 1547, or there about that time, an English stuccoist who had travelled in Italy, Charles Williams by name, is found working in England. He most probably had assisted in the work at Fontainebleau, and also at Nonesuch.

In 1547 Charles Williams wrote to Sir John Thynne, who was then engaged in building Longleat House, Wilt-

shire, and offered Sir John his services in supplying internal decorations "in the Italian fashion."

At Longleat are two letters from Sir William Cavendish and his wife asking for the use of this "cunning playsterer, whom they had heard had made dyvers pendants, and other pretty things, and had flowered the hall at Longleat," to do like work for them at Hardwick.

The old hall at Hardwick, now in ruins, was being built from 1567 to 1590,

but was never completed. On the walls of the Giants' Chamber are to be seen at the present time the remains of a modelled frieze of excellent workmanship, undoubtedly the work of Charles Williams.

Figs. 58-60 show portions of this frieze, which has remained exposed to the atmospheric influences ever since its execution, and Figs. 61, 62 modelled work in stucco from other portions of the same building.

There is proof in what now remains of this frieze of the extraordinary durability of the stucco which was used then. The veining of the leaves, and the marks of the tools, are yet distinctly visible.

I am indebted to the late Duke of Devonshire for so kindly allowing me not only to examine this frieze, but to take photographs of it, and of the one in the state room of the later building. It can be proved that the stucco of the earliest frieze was composed of the limestone of the district, *air-slaked* for a



FIG. 61.—Hardwick Old Hall, Derbyshire. Stucco-Duro Wall Panelling, from Ruins.

considerable period, and mixed with a fine, sharp local grit. It is fine, extremely hard, and difficult to break.

This frieze was much damaged at the dismantling of the elder building. The modelling is much superior in design and execution to that in the present Hardwick Hall, built about 1590 to 1597.

It is to be regretted that the ruins of the old hall are now in an extremely dangerous condition, so much so that there is risk in pursuing one's studies there.

Charles Williams established a school of English stucco modelers.



FIG. 62.—Overmantel from the Old Hall, Hardwick.

The coloured frieze in the state room of the present Hardwick Hall is probably the work of this school, executed between 1590-97, and, besides being coarser in





FIGS. 63 AND 64.—HARDWICK HALL, DERBYSHIRE.

Portions of Modelled and Tempera-Painted Frieze on Walls of Presence Chamber.





FIGS. 65 AND 66.—HARDWICK HALL, DERBYSHIRE.

Portions of Modelled and Tempera-Painted Frieze on Walls of Presence Chamber.



workmanship, it is inferior to the earlier example. The frieze, which is partly illustrated in Figs. 63-66, represents a hunting scene in a forest of trees, with human figures, animals, birds, plants, and hills, modelled in moderately strong relief, and coloured in a tempera medium. (*Some of the natural objects, birds, fruit, &c., are painted on the background in tempera medium.*) In places the colouring has been "restored" in oil, much to the detriment of the original work.

The two friezes serve to show the type of work that was being done at the time, and are perhaps the best examples remaining. The design of these English friezes is inferior to the Italian work.



FIG. 67.—Haddon Hall, Derbyshire. Stucco-Duro Overmantel in State Bedroom.

There is other work in modelled stucco over some of the chimney-pieces at Hardwick; and at Haddon Hall, in the state bedroom, is a quaint chimney overmantel, representing Orpheus chanting to the beasts of the earth, and the birds of the air, in uncoloured stucco (Fig. 67).

It must be remembered that during the short and troubled reigns of Edward VI. and Queen Mary, England was in the throes of political and religious strife, and during that period comparatively little decorative work was done: little until the time of Queen Elizabeth, during whose long and prosperous reign the art of the English plasterer took another turn and developed a character peculiar to the native workmen, to which reference is made in the following chapter.

There are many other examples of the work of the early stucco-workers in England, but one will be sufficient perhaps.

The old castle on St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, has a simple but narrow hunting frieze (Figs. 68, 69) with huntsmen, dogs, stags, and stunted trees, undoubtedly the work of English modellers. The pudding-like appearance of the animals and men here, as at Haddon Hall, clearly shows the unfamiliarity of the native artist with human and animal forms. In that matter they could not compete with the better educated foreigners, who were well versed in the delineation and modelling of the human figure.

The Englishman, left to himself, tended towards the burlesque, while the



FIG. 68.



FIG. 69.

Chevy Chase Friezes from St Michael's Mount, Cornwall.

Italian, on the other hand, came as near to the perfection of form as he was allowed to by the material.

At Denham Place, near Uxbridge, is another modelled hunting frieze, taking the form of a deep cove, round the drawing-room. The building of the house was completed about 1700, so the frieze (which is said to be the work of Dutchmen) cannot be assigned to a much earlier date. Many of the figures are in nearly full relief, and stag-hunting, hare-coursing, otter-hunting, fox-hunting, rabbit-shooting, and falconry are all represented in stucco. (See *Country Life*, 18th November 1901.)

Rabbits peep out of their burrows, and are most quaintly modelled and coloured.



This frieze, although later than any of the foregoing, is still a most excellent work, leaving but little to be desired.

The billiard-room has another cove, partly modelled and partly coloured like that of the drawing-room, but of simpler and inferior design and execution.

Other work at Burton Agnes, Yorkshire, and elsewhere is described in Chapter VI. in reference to ceilings.

It should be carefully noted how aptly these examples illustrate the difference between the decorative and the pictorial element in the compelling of the form and scale of the figures, animals, birds, and plants into the space they have to occupy.

## CHAPTER VI.

## "WATTLE AND DAB" AND PARGE-WORK.

## A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY EXAMPLE OF "WATTLE AND DAB."

THE writer is indebted to Mr G. W. Smith for the following photograph and description of "wattle and dab" work, taken from the Queen's Head Inn, Down, Kent, during alterations in August 1898 (Fig. 70).



FIG. 70.—Fifteenth-Century Wattle and Dab, from Queen's Head Inn, Down, Kent.

"Wattle and dab," undoubtedly from the use of the "wattled cotes" of the shepherds, was the term applied to the external covering of timber constructed buildings, few examples of which now remain.

The figure shows a portion of the original south gable of the old inn, which stood just north of the old churchyard.

The house is said to have been built in the fifteenth century.

The letters indicate: A, the oak tie-beam; A2, one of the braces to kingpost—this brace was quite buried in the clay; B, the upright slats of *cleft* oak, between which the rods, C, were woven.



The rods were 1 inch or  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch thick, mostly hazel sticks with the bark on. The bark and stick was found to be as sound and tough as when it was fixed, and every little vein in the bark perfect. We came across several sticks



FIG. 71.—Hertford, Parge-work on Shop opposite Town Hall.

together on the wattle, and then kept throwing it on until they got on the thickness wanted. The front, or outside, was then combed, or lined out with a pointed stick.

of ash, quite worm-eaten and rotten, and often the only material left in the clay to show their position. D shows the straw used in mixing up the pug, or clay, to toughen it. This was quite perfect, and as dry as bone. E shows the face of the plaster, *inside* the room. G, the old lime-white, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick (a good many coats of it).

F shows a specimen of *modern* work at the back of another room. This was part of the later additions to the old house, and shows at a glance the old and the new style of plastering. Both are worked on laths, but of different form.

“Wattles” are still made in this district, from hazel rods, and are used for sheep-folding.

It is said that working the “dab” into the “wattle” was done by two men (one on each side), so that they met

### PARGETTING OR PARGE-WORK.

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were responsible for the establishment of another school of plaster craftsmanship in England. The stucco-duro material of the Italians gave place to the employment and use of a coarser material, the ordinary lime and sand and hair with which the native workman coated his walls. This material, which was similar to that now used for the parging of flues, contained a certain amount of cow-dung and road scrapings, and became, as time went on, the decorative medium of the *native English*

"*Playsterer*." It was applied to any part of the structure, internally and externally, and is still found in and on very many of the out-of-the-way cottages and houses of the eastern and southern counties.

It is impossible to say exactly when parge plastering was first used decoratively in this country, but so far as we know the earliest example now extant in England dates from about 1557.

There is every reason for thinking that parge must have been used decoratively much earlier than this date, as most of the buildings destroyed by the great fire of London in 1666, many of which must have been built prior to 1557, were externally and conspicuously covered with this kind of plaster decoration.



FIG. 72.—Wyvenhoe, Essex.

Professor Lethaby says :—

"In the eastern counties plasterwork repairs in out-of-the-way cottages still clumsily match the deft, old pattern work, which, after being perfected by hundreds of years, is now done no longer. By careful inquiry, you may find an old workman who remembers seeing it done when young, who can describe the tools and knows the patterns—'tortoise-shell,' 'square pricking,' and the rest.

"He will add that modern plaster is quite unfit for work of this sort.\* The old material was well washed, beaten, stirred, and tested so carefully, and for so long a time, that, when laid, it was as tough as leather."

Parge decoration did not require the skill of the educated artist for its application. The work was mostly done by the village plasterer, or mason, who confined his

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\* This brings to mind an example in Fleet Street, executed by Mr T. E. Colcutt, thirty years ago, in ordinary lime and hair, which has stood the test of time without any deterioration.



humble efforts to his own particular radius of a few miles. He had his own patterns, which he varied at pleasure, and it is interesting to note the change of manner and workmanship as one passes from the district of one man into that of another.

In some cases the timber framing of the house forms the frame of panels. In others we have all lath and plaster, as in most of the examples here illustrated.

A very common ornament in Essex is the zigzag, incised in the plaster, the whole surface being pricked with a pointed instrument or stick.

In some cases, patterns were made with a fan of pointed sticks, still used by the plasterer of our own time for "pricking-up" or "roughing-up" the surface of the rendering coat, to form a "key" for the following coat of plaster.

Some patterns were scalloped, as on a cottage at Hertford (Fig. 71), a very common filling to the panels between timber framing; and some were done in simple, wavy, or flowing lines like moving water, as often represented by the ancients. At other places the waving lines intersected, or were interlaced like basket-work, or were done symmetrically—here horizontally, there vertically (Fig. 72). In Ipswich we find slight patterns resembling the patterns of roughly-woven matting, done with a comb. The "herring-bone" was a frequent pattern (Figs. 73, 74). Other patterns resemble the "wattle" of the sheepfold, made of interwoven hazel rods.

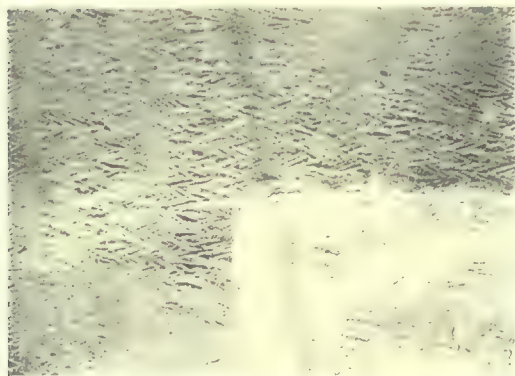


FIG. 73.

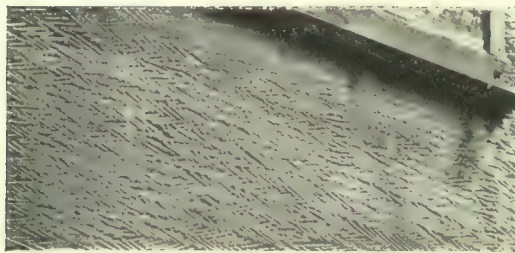


FIG. 74.

Comb Ornament, Lavenham, Suffolk.

Some of the parge-work is ornamented with arrangements of symmetrical, flat, strapwork patterns, in some instances in panels, and in others over the whole surface of a wall, as in Fig. 72. Some of the work is only suggestive of natural form, while in other instances it went somewhat further, and figures and bird forms were attempted, as at Saffron Walden, Essex (Fig. 75).

These figures were generally failures, however, mere burlesques of the genuine article, because of the ignorance of proportion and anatomy which they betrayed.

Advantage was generally taken of the spaces between the windows, under the windows, over doors, in the gables, and dormers, or along the surface of a cove under the eaves of a house, and likewise along the facing of a beam.

One form of parge decoration consisted of a simple type of incising, or cutting patterns through the top layer of plaster down to the coating underneath, somewhat resembling the "sgraffito-work" mentioned in Chapter IV.

Another quite common custom, as at Banbury (Fig. 76), was that of placing templates of thin wood on the surface of the last coat but one, in borders, and panels,

and "rough-casting" round them up to the level of the template boards. Upon the removal of the variously shaped templates a recessed pattern was left, and these recessed shaped portions were sometimes tinted with bright colours, apple greens, ochre yellows, and earthy reds, which, when paled and seasoned, were

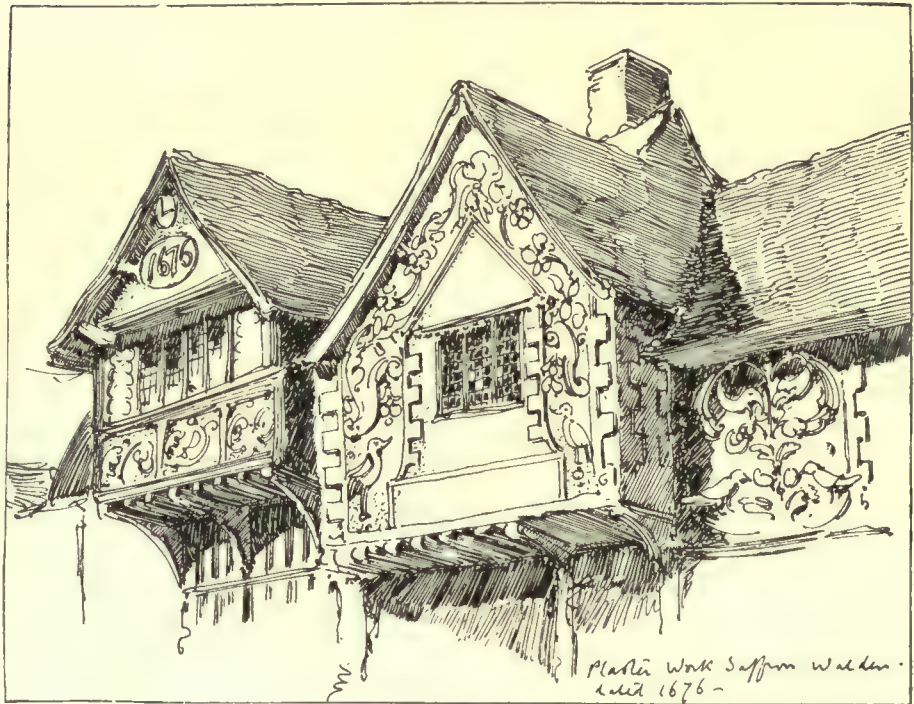


FIG. 75.—Saffron Walden, Essex.

*Drawn by R. T. Blomfield, A.R.A.*



FIG. 76.—Recessed Ornament, Banbury, Oxon.

often of pleasing effect.

At Lavenham, Suffolk, another house has the face of the outside walls on the bottom floor panelled out with flatly scratched mouldings, and also shows the remains of what was once an example of very interesting modelled parge ornament in panels, round the first floor windows and in the projecting gable.

Several other houses have the whole face of the walls covered with an acute-angled herring-bone pattern of rather small scale, well *combed* into the surface of the plaster as before.





FIG. 77.—SPARROW'S HOUSE, IPSWICH.

At *Ipswich* there are numerous examples of external parge decoration, dating about 1557, of which the best known is Sparrow's house (Fig. 77). The modelling, though coarse and clumsy, is spirited, vigorous, and decorative. The chief part of the ornament is as usual out of reach on the first floor, between and under the windows, and is evidently the work of the native craftsmen. The chief panels at the base of the oriel windows contain childish representations of figures, buildings, and animals, which are supposed to be representative of Europe, Asia, and Africa (Fig.



FIG. 78.



FIG. 79.



FIG. 80.

Detail of Panels from Sparrow's House, Ipswich.

78). The modelling on the curved sides of the oriels is of scrolled leafage, with masks. The intervening wall space between the oriels, from the first floor level to the overhanging moulded entablature, is divided by heavy pilasters, with modelled caps, moulded bases, and panelled-moulded plinths. Heavily modelled swags and drops hang from (or across) the pilasters at the tops of the panels, under the entablature. One of these is composed of fruit and leaves (Fig. 79), one of birds, another of flowers, and one of a medley of common utensils. At the bases of



the four panels are a vase of flowers, Neptune with trident (riding a seahorse), a swan, and a hunting scene. The central panel is filled with the Royal Arms and the usual motto. Roughly formed swags and drops occupy the panel between the carved wood brackets under the first floor level; other tympana of the gables and dormers have figures and drops.

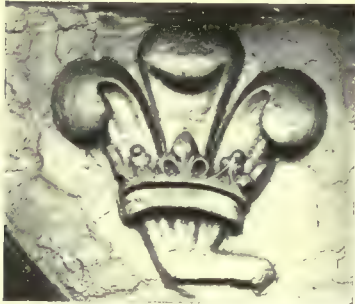


FIG. 81.—Sparrow's House, Ipswich.

The panel underneath the window at the back of building (Fig. 80) has a chariot drawn by plumed horses, some figures, a tree with fruit and leafage, and a figure observing the royal procession; immediately above are the prince's feathers and crown (Fig. 81), and below, a vase of flowers (Fig. 82).



FIG. 82.—Sparrow's House, Ipswich.



FIG. 83.—The Old Fishpond Houses, London.

*From Blomfield's "Renaissance in England."*

*At Ashwell, Herts, is an old house, the front of which, on the upper floor, is panelled with flat styles and ribs. The panels are roughly modelled with scrolled leafage and stems.*

*Saffron Walden, Essex, 1600, has several good but "restored" examples of*

external parge decoration. On the gable of the "Old Sun Inn" an interesting but primitive piece of modelling is to be seen. On each side of the first floor is a flat S-shaped scroll, ending at the top and bottom in a rude form of volute. From the base of this scroll, and growing in a waved line up the rake of the gable, springs a stem, bearing pears and leafage, broken at intervals by patches of fruit and leaves.

At the base of each scroll is a grotesque bird, facing inwards, and under the first floor window a range of interlaced arched stem-work—immediately over and under the sill runs a narrow strip of stem and leafage.

Round the window and bounding the gable sides is some raised quoin work, and a flat raking band under the eaves and over the window. The quoins and bands are left by cut templates (Fig. 75).

Two or three other gables adjoining are decorated in a similar manner, one with burlesque figures, and another with birds—with cusped, template, marginal work.

At *Bocking, Essex*, are three old houses side by side, dated 1590 and 1667, upon the faces of which are the remains of a running pattern and panes of elaborate parge-work ornamentation, now much damaged.

Close to, there is a single gable of most delicately modelled parge-work.

There are traces of more parge ornament on the main body of another house. A small window and door have been inserted in the wall of this house, breaking into the spirited floral design, and spoiling very completely the run of its flowing lines.

The rest of the street has been modernised, with the exception of one house on the opposite side of the road, which has been spoilt by the addition of a large gable containing *modern* parge modelling of a most deplorable kind.

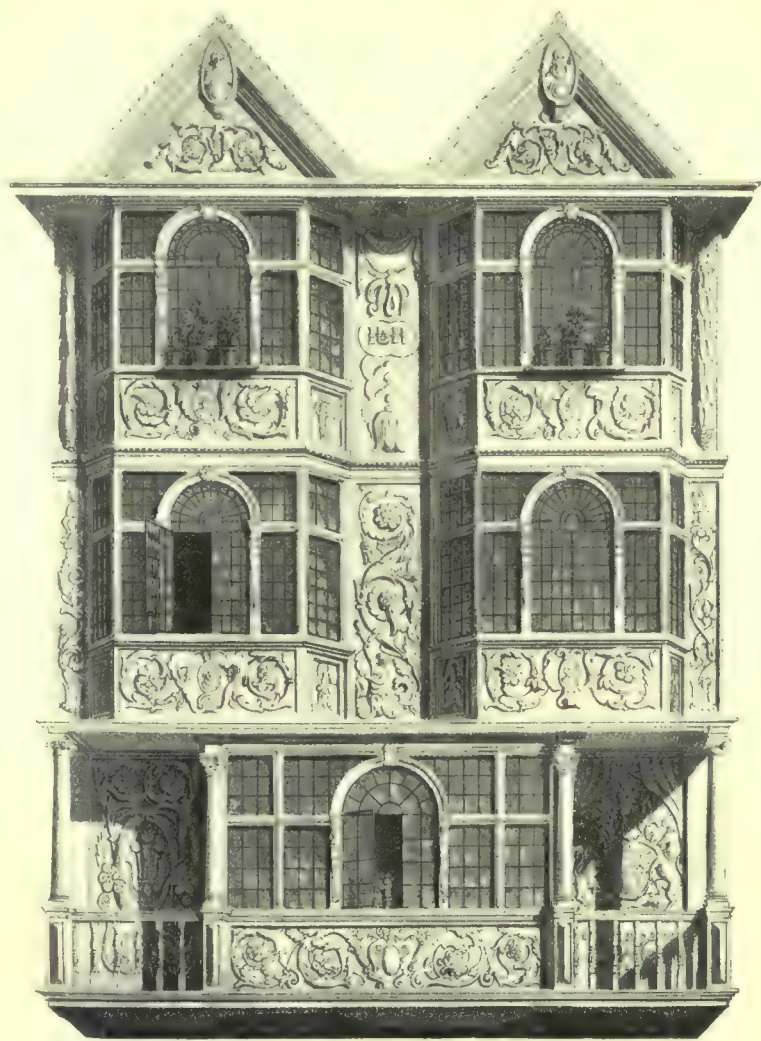


FIG. 84.—High Street, Maidstone, Kent.

*Drawn by — Davey.*



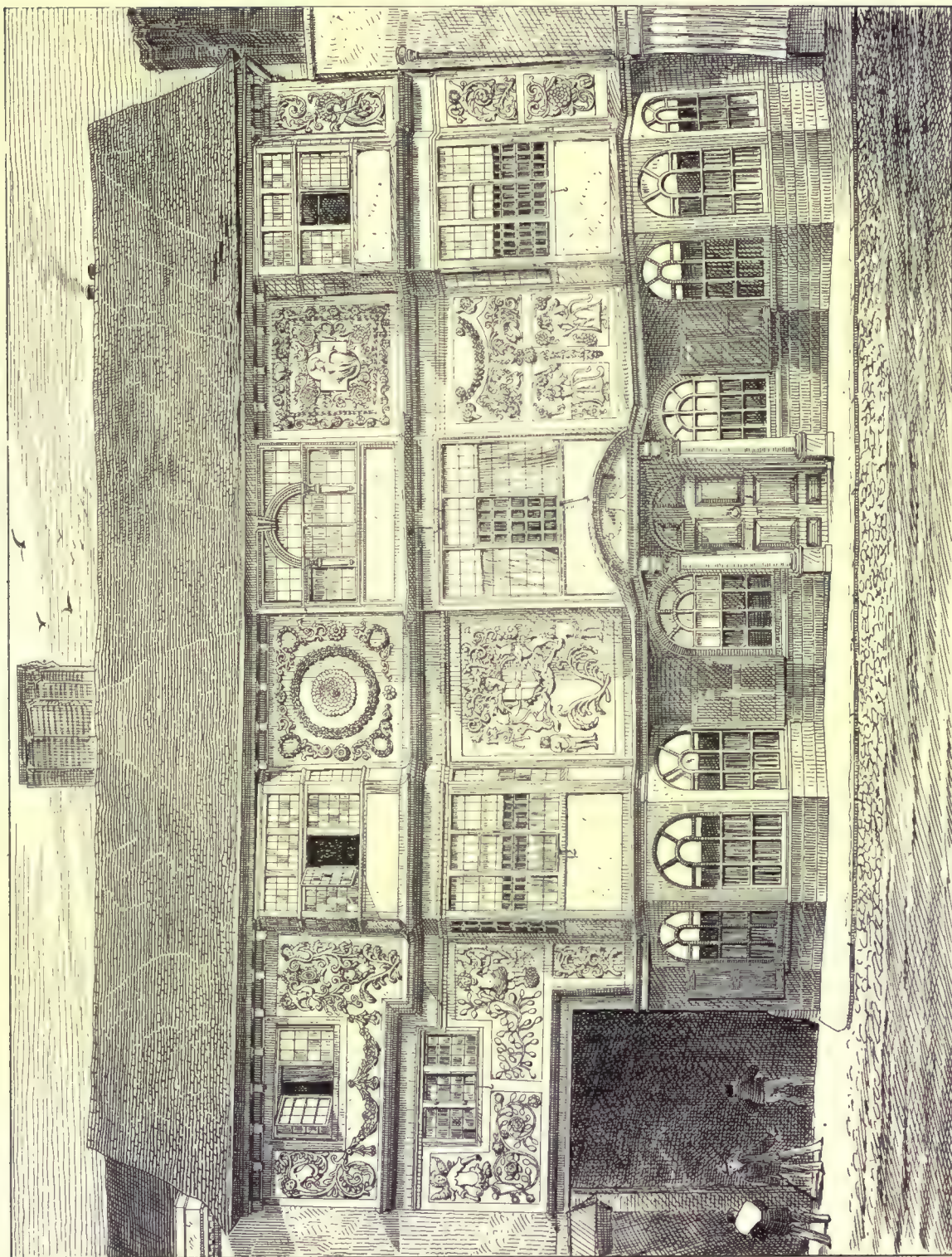


FIG. 85.—PARGETRY ON HOUSE IN HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE, NOW PULLED DOWN.

*Drawn by Maurice B. Adams, F.R.I.B.A.*





FIG. 86.—CONEY STREET, YORK.



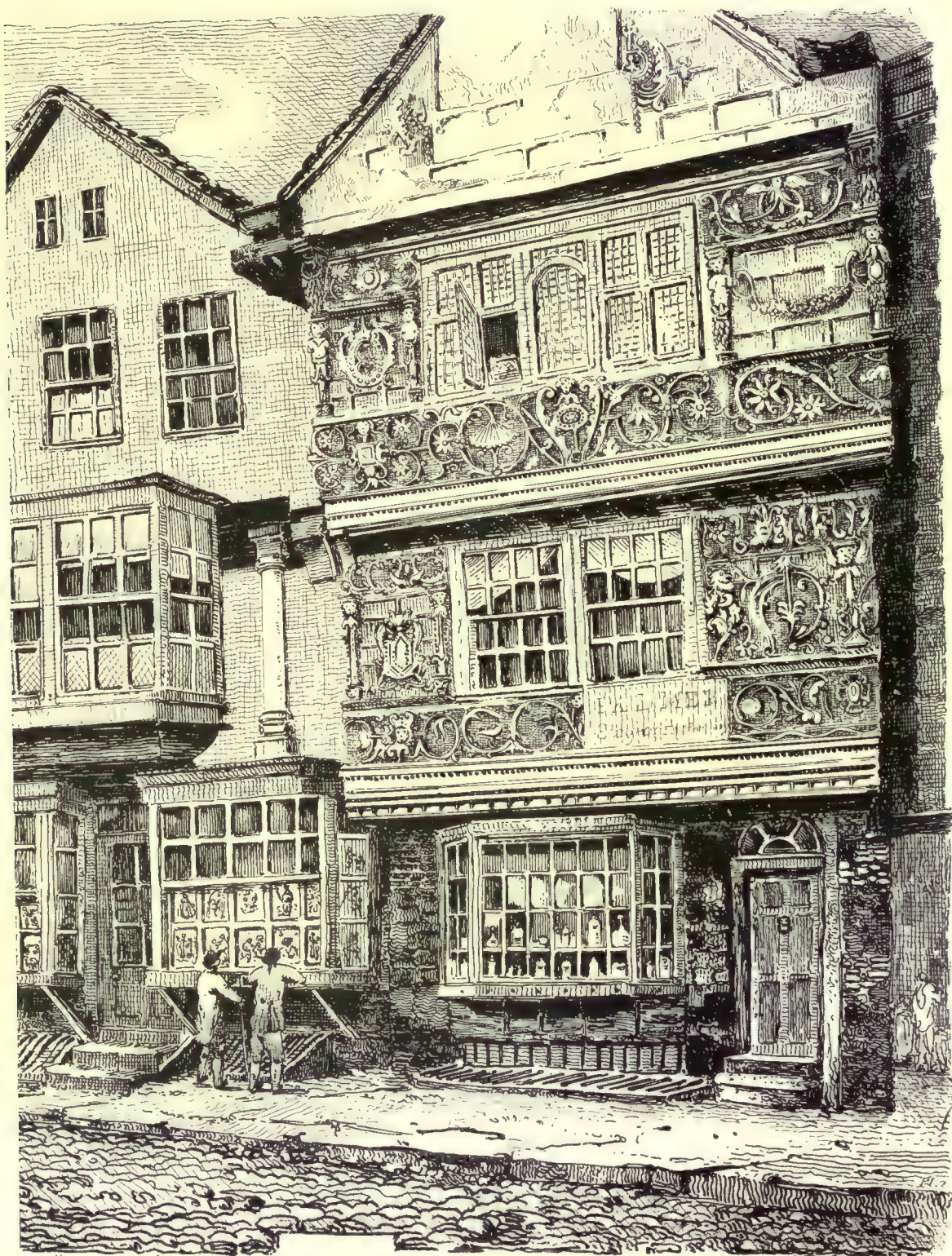


FIG. 87.—CONEY STREET, YORK.





FIG. 88.—LITTLE MOOR FIELDS,  
LONDON.





FIG. 89.—HOUSE (SOUTH SIDE), LONDON WALL, LONDON.



Fig. 83 is from an old print of old houses at Fishponds, and gives a very fair idea of the external plaster treatment of the late seventeenth-century houses.

*Maidstone, Kent, 1611.*—Fig. 84 is from a sketch of a house in High Street, at the back of the Town Hall, the residence of a wealthy merchant of the town, whose portrait and that of his wife are introduced into several oval cartouche panels on the front of the oriel windows. A panel in the upper story between the two windows has the date 1611. The main panels are neatly filled with scrolled leafage with rosette centres, and the narrower side panels with flowing stem, husk, and leafage, amongst which are small figures. This front has been altered considerably since the time of the original sketch by Mr Davey, from which the drawing by Mr C. J. Richardson was made, when the house was in its complete state. Fig. 85 illustrates another interesting example of parge-work once existing in Maidstone.



FIG. 90.—Stanstead, Suffolk.  
Drawn by R. T. Blomfield, A.R.A.

The old house at the Bridge End of High Street, Maidstone, in spite of many

public protests, was ruthlessly pulled down a few years ago to give place to a new Post Office.

*York* was particularly rich in houses having external parge decoration. Fig. 86 is from an old print of a house in Coney Street, and Fig. 87 from one of a house in Stone Gate. Both are examples of the ornamentation of houses such as were built in the towns in the reign of Charles I.

The houses in London streets up to the time of the Great Fire,



FIG. 91.—No. 35 Week Street, Maidstone, Kent.

1666, showed a great deal of this external parge decoration. Old prints of royal processions, to be seen in the British and other museums, show that the vast majority of the timber-built houses were covered externally with parge-work. Very many of them were panelled out, and enriched with plaster ornamentation of the



type illustrated in Fig. 88, an old house in Little Moor Fields, and in Fig. 89, a house on the south side of London Wall.

The better houses seem to have been panelled or decorated in the spaces adjoining, or between the windows of the upper floors, with boldly modelled scroll work of foliated leafage, with flowered centres and figure work, or with cartouches, sprays, swags and drops, brackets, armorial panels, crowns, crests, or personal devices. Few examples, however, remain at the present time, and a few more municipal enterprises conceived in the spirit of the Strand improvement scheme will speedily settle the fate of all that are left in London.



FIG. 92.



FIG. 93.

"Colneford House," Earl's Colne, Essex.

It would be impossible to have in this book anything like a complete list of such buildings. All that has been attempted is to give an idea of the extent to which external wall decoration was practised. The proof, if any were wanted, is in the illustrations which have been shown.

*At Stanstead*, in Suffolk, is an exceedingly decorative application of cut template work in the gable of a cottage, Fig. 90 (from a sketch by Reginald Blomfield, Esq., A.R.A.). In the margins up the steep rake of the gable is a stem and branching leaf, terminating three parts of the way up; at the apex are the initials R. C., and the date 1651. The centre portion of the gable is filled with an interlacing square placed anglewise, and at the bottom two cruciform sunk

panels. On the first floor level below the window is an indication of a plaited design in scratched work. This is a very apt illustration of the work of the village plasterer.

*Maidstone, Kent, 1680 (Fig. 91).*—A house, No. 35 Week Street, has the two upper floors ornamented between the windows with modelled "parge" work; the panels are bounded by pilasters carrying sham arches and key blocks. The two central panels contain swags hanging from a primitive form of cap, with oval and diamond-shaped panels under. The lower panel above the swag has the initials S. P., the date 1680, and a rosette with a bird on either side.

Between the pilasters in the outer panels of the second floor is an oval with a raised diamond panel, and central disc; the panel immediately under contains a large vase on the flat (fleur-de-lis, tulip, &c.).

The panels of the double oriel window



FIG. 94.—"Colneford House," Earl's Colne, Essex.



FIG. 95.—Wyvenhoe, Essex.



have also some slight enrichment. The modelling there is rude, and the treatment is very flat.



FIG. 96.



FIG. 97



FIG. 98.



FIG. 99.



FIG. 100.



FIG. 101.

High Street, Canterbury.

Colne. Above this the wall space is worked in unconfined panels of flat strap-work, scrolls, and conventional foliage, suggestive of honeysuckle and rose branching out from flat cruciform stems which radiate squarewise from diamond or lozenge-

*Earl's Colne, Essex*, 1685 (Figs. 92 - 94). — Colneford House, dated 1685, is a fine example of parge decoration. Between the windows of the first floor, down to the level of the window heads below, are symmetrical panels of flat strap-work, in scrolls of geometrical arrangement, and fruit, rosettes, or quatrefoils and shells, occupy the centre of each panel, round which is a running border of flat stemwork design and leafage.

The spaces under the windows are plain, but scratched horizontally. In the centre of one of the panels, next the door, is an oval containing the initials T. C. E., and in another the date is 1685.

*Wyvenhoe, Essex* (Figs. 72 and 95). — In a street south of the church is a very fine example of parge-work covering the whole front of the house above the ground floor. Immediately above the ground floor windows is a broad band of running enrichment and leafage, similar in character to the panel borders at Colneford House, Earl's

shaped centres, containing lesser diamond or oval straps. Between two of the windows is a vertical band of cut template work, and near the base of the same, a small plain panel.

The gable end of the building (Fig. 72) is scratched in an interlacing or plaited pattern with scratched filling. The ground floor of the building is boarded. Facing the west end of the church is an old house with an enriched and coved plaster cornice.

*At Beauchamp*, near Rochford, is an example dated 1688.

*Canterbury*, 1690, has an interesting specimen of external parge decoration on the top story of an old house in High Street (Figs. 96-101). The panels at the end, and on the front are filled in with boldly modelled cartouches made



FIG. 102.—House at Newport, Essex.

up of scroll-work, shells, husks, and palm leafage with the crown at top, supported by thistle and rose sprays on either side.

The two centre panels are filled with the figures of a young Bacchus seated on a wine cask, from behind which springs and spreads a strong growth of grape-vine fruit and leafage.

The end panel has another cartouche, palm spray, and crown arrangement of flatter modelling, and is larger than the other four.

These panels were once coloured, and still are, but the original colouring has long since been replaced (*c.* 1690).

*At Newport, Essex*, is an interesting example on the front of a house said to have been inhabited by Nell Gwyn (see Fig. 102). This, however, is erroneous, as



she died in 1667 and the house is dated 1692. Between the windows on each floor is a panel, formed by mouldings of simple section. The modelling in those on the first floor is of some sort of plant springing out of small vessels.



FIG. 103.



FIG. 104.

The Limes, Prittlewell, Essex, now demolished.

Horizontal panels are grouped on each side of the central doorway, under the middle first floor windows, with slight enrichments therein. A kind of label

runs over the top of the ground floor window heads, with a dotted pattern above and below. The lower panels are quite plain, but have an inner panelled surface of plain plaster.

*Great Chesterford, Essex*, has another example at the corner of the churchyard, dated 1692; a beam at the base of the gable has a band of conventional leaf enrichment, and panels on either side of the wall.



FIG. 105.—Panel over Door at Rampyndene, Burwash, Sussex.



FIG. 106.—Fishpool Street, St Albans.





FIG. 107.—Gable End of the Long Gallery, Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire.



FIG. 108.—Calgarth Old Hall, Westmorland.

*At Wethersford, Essex, is an old house, with panels of strapwork arrangement between the ground and first floor windows.*

*Prittlewell, Essex (Figs. 103, 104).—On an old house known as "The Limes" was an exceptionally interesting parge decoration, in between and around the windows of the*

first floor. The decoration takes the character of symmetrical, flat, scrolled leafage, with fruit in slight relief surrounding cartouche-like central forms, with swags and strap-work. The coved cornice under the eaves of the roof was also treated with scrolled leafage and rosettes at intervals.

*Burwash*, 1699.—Over the doorway of an old house called "Rampyndene," ceilings from the staircase of which are illustrated in Figs. 393A and 393B, is a panel containing a central cartouche shield, with the initials I. B. and date 1699; a mask and two scrolls at top, and a lesser mask and two cornucopiæ at



FIG. 109.



FIG. 110.

Parge-work Overmantels from Cottages at Wear Gifford, N. Devon.

bottom, from which branches a spreading growth of roses and leaves. The panel is confined by beaded mouldings, outside which is a stem with corkscrewed ribbons (Fig. 105).

Lambert's Farm, in the parish of Great Tey, Essex, has a parged front. The ornament is very coarse, and the front has a very patched effect.

At *Fingringhoe*, *Essex*, is an old house, now divided up into cottages, showing some good ornamental parge-work.

The seventeenth-century parge decoration of the village plasterer or mason was applied as freely to the interior of buildings as to the outside.



Fig. 106 illustrates parge-work from a house in Fishpool Street, St Albans, which, although it has suffered a recent restoration, still shows the delicacy of the running enrichment within soft mouldings; which are below the face of the surrounding panels, whose edges are slightly bevelled.



FIG. 111.—From the Manor House, West Down, N. Devon.



FIG. 112.—From House in High Street, Barnstaple.

Fig. 107 shows an early example of the decoration of a gable end in the Long Gallery, *Little Moreton Hall*, and is interesting for the refinement of its decorative setting and the freedom of its handling.

The favourite spots of the parge-worker were overmantels, gable ends, and lunettes, formed by curved and coved ceilings, or coves above the cornice, inside rooms, frieze spaces, coves, panels, staircase soffits and landing, and in early times the ceiling itself. An interesting parge modelled overmantel is to be seen at *Calgarth Old Hall*, about a mile from Windermere Station (Fig. 108). What was once the arched fireplace opening is now filled in and occupied by a modern kitchen oven-and-boiler range. Above the arch the overmantel is lined by rudely run beaded mouldings. Two shields, with armorial bearings and crests over, occupy the main filling of the panels, and from the bottom right-hand corner straggles a growth of leafage and berries. The motto, "FIDE NON FRAUD," is at the top immediately under the ceiling moulding. A portion of the old frieze still remains here, but the whole work is very much filled up with whitening.

Portions of two delightful, simple parge-work chimney overmantels are illustrated in Figs. 109 and 110. They are taken from two cottages at *Wear Gifford, North Devon*, and in their place are typical of the period in which they were done.

Greater ambition is shown in the overmantels illustrated in Figs. 111-113, in the first of which the various ages of man are supposed to be allegorically represented. Fig. 114 shows a type of strap-work panel of a rather later period.

At *Braughing, Herts*, the "Rose and Crown" at the west end of the church has crowns and other devices in panels.



FIG. 113.

Chimney Overmantel, Ground Floor, Trevelyan Hotel, High Street, Barnstaple.



FIG. 114.





FIG. 115.—External Frieze u

*At Albury, Herts*, in a house adjoining the churchyard, is a similar treatment of panels.

*At Sawbridgeworth*, the "Three Mill Pond" farm has panels of diamond and cusped forms in squares between the windows.

*At East Dereham* is a cottage with a very pleasing, deep belt of running stem,



FIG. 116.—Hertford, Parge-work on Shop opposite Town Hall.

flowers, and leaf ornament under the eaves across the whole front of the building (see Fig. 115).

*At Hertford*, a house in Fore Street near the Town Hall has an interesting treatment of scrolled leafage in some of the panels, and scratchwork in others. Narrow, modelled drops occur on the plaster framing to plain panels (Figs. 71, 116, and 117).



s of Cottages, East Dereham.

*At Clare, Suffolk*, is a very fine piece of parge ornamentation, done in loops with a small trowel, on the front and gable of a house opposite the church (Figs. 118, 119). The old plaster on the end gable of this house has fallen away, and has been patched up beyond recognition.



FIG. 117.—Parge-work on Shop opposite the Town Hall, Hertford.

*St Albans, Herts*, and neighbourhood has many examples of parge-work ornamentation. No. 135 Fishpool Street is treated with flush plaster panelling round the windows, the styles and rails of which are beaded and enriched with a flat running stem and leaf ornament. No. 13 Fishpool Street has another similar but more simple treatment.





FIG. 118.—House, Clare, Suffolk.



FIG. 119.—Detail from Panel of House, Clare, Suffolk.

*Lavenham, Suffolk*, has an old house decorated at the first floor level with very slight, flat strap-work, forming small squares, connected by short pieces. At the base of one gable is a horizontal band of enrichment, made up of fleurs-de-lis, alternating with sprigs of tulips. Another gable has tiny circles bounding the squares. The modelling is very much filled up with whitening.

*At Ingatestone, Essex*, is a parge-work panel on the front of one of the houses—a rose, with central stem, and leafage on each side.

*At Colchester*, on the left side of the Foundry Yard, High Street, is a house on the front of which is some parge-work, similar to that on the old house at Wyvenhoe, but simpler in design.

Somersetshire and Devonshire are full of interesting specimens of *internal* parge-work. The lunette end of a

bedroom at Barnstaple (Fig. 122) is a more advanced example of the village plasterer's art than the foregoing.



FIG. 121.—High Street, Barnstaple, N. Devon.

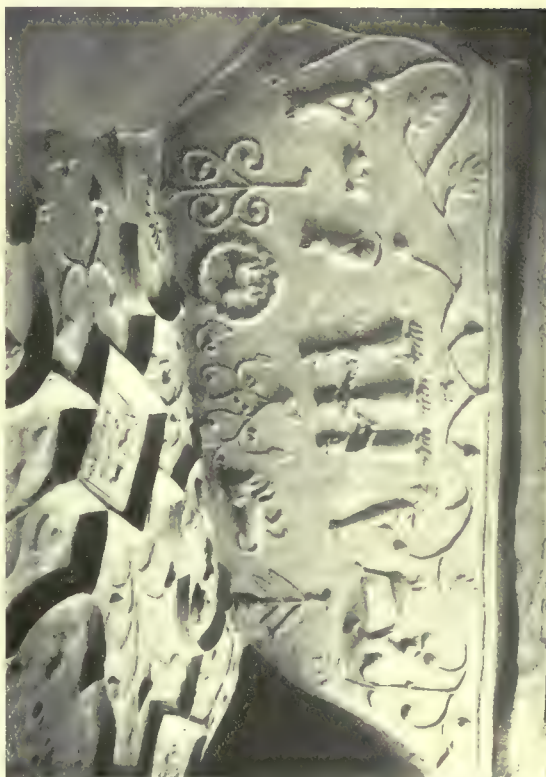


FIG. 123.—Lunette in Bedroom, Stamford.



FIG. 120.—High Street, Barnstaple, N. Devon.



FIG. 122.—High Street, Barnstaple, N. Devon.



The centre space is occupied by a draped and feathered head, below which on either side, springing from an urn, are cornucopiæ, with palm leaves encircling the head, and also, branching out to left and right, a double scroll of stem and leafage with central rosettes—all in perfectly flat relief. In the lower part of the space on either side are a lion, a unicorn, and winged griffin in high relief. The background filled in between is spotted with satches of plaster to represent tufts of grass, &c. &c.



FIG. 124. —At Stamford.

In this room the stilted portion, at spring of waggon vault, is moulded off into a frieze of honeysuckle, which scrolls off on either side from the central husk and leaf (Fig. 121). The modelling is extremely simple, and of early date. The vault itself, semi-elliptical in section, is divided into panels by simple, moulded ribs, enriched with sprays of foliage of similar character to the modelled work of the frieze (Fig. 120).

A very primitive and curious attempt at wall decoration is to be seen on the lunette of an upper floor room at *Stamford* (Fig. 123), in which two watchmen and a woman occupy the central place of honour. On the left, the power of Might over Right is shown by a goose between two foxes, whilst another apt illustration of the same fable is expressed by a mouse between two cats.



FIG. 125.—Over Cottage Door, Thirsk, Yorkshire.

*Sydney Vacher del.*

A branching vine grows from the centre on each side. Over the old woman is a fruit tree, on the left of which is a creature meant for a hound, but suggesting an elephant rather. On the right, a stag is fenced in a circular enclosure; a thistle spray and a fruit spray complete the whole story.

The flat portion of the ceiling in this room is panelled out with single moulded

ribs into squares and quatrefoils linked together anglewise. The larger and irregular panels contain crudely modelled sprays and sprigs of flat form. The quatrefoil panels have winged heads, animals, masks, and other patterns of personal significance (Fig. 124).

*At Faversham, Kent*, in one of the main streets, there is an interesting example of exterior parge scroll-work decoration, which, in ignorance, has been painted black and therefore ruined in appearance.

Other illustrations of interesting parge modelling are shown in Figs. 125 and 126.



FIG. 126.—A Frieze in the old Police Station Cells, Oxford.

*Sydney Vacher del.*





FIG. 127.—SHEET OF SECTIONS OF SINGLE MOULDED RIBS.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE ENGLISH SCHOOL OF PLASTERWORK.

WE have seen from the two previous chapters, how the art of the plasterer was introduced into this country by Henry VIII., and how it was fostered for a

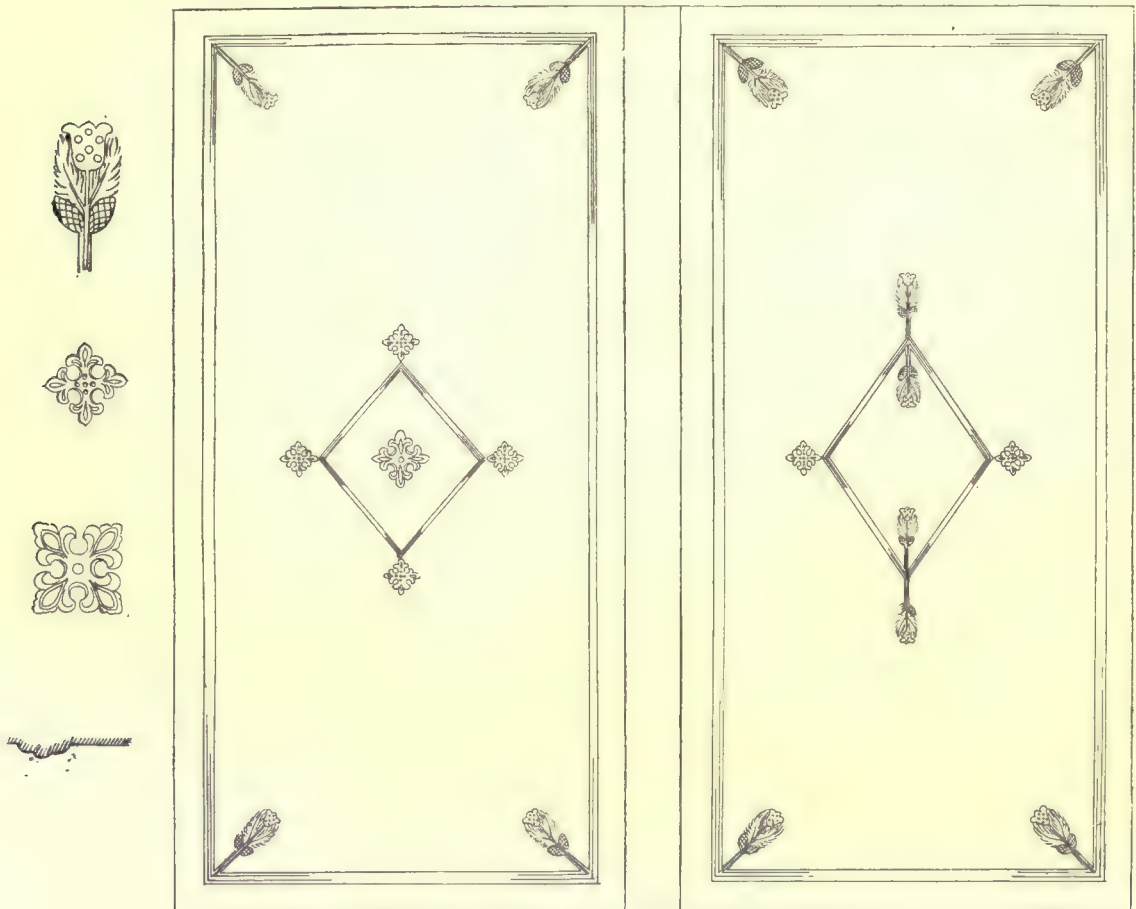


FIG. 128.—Througham House, near Cirencester.

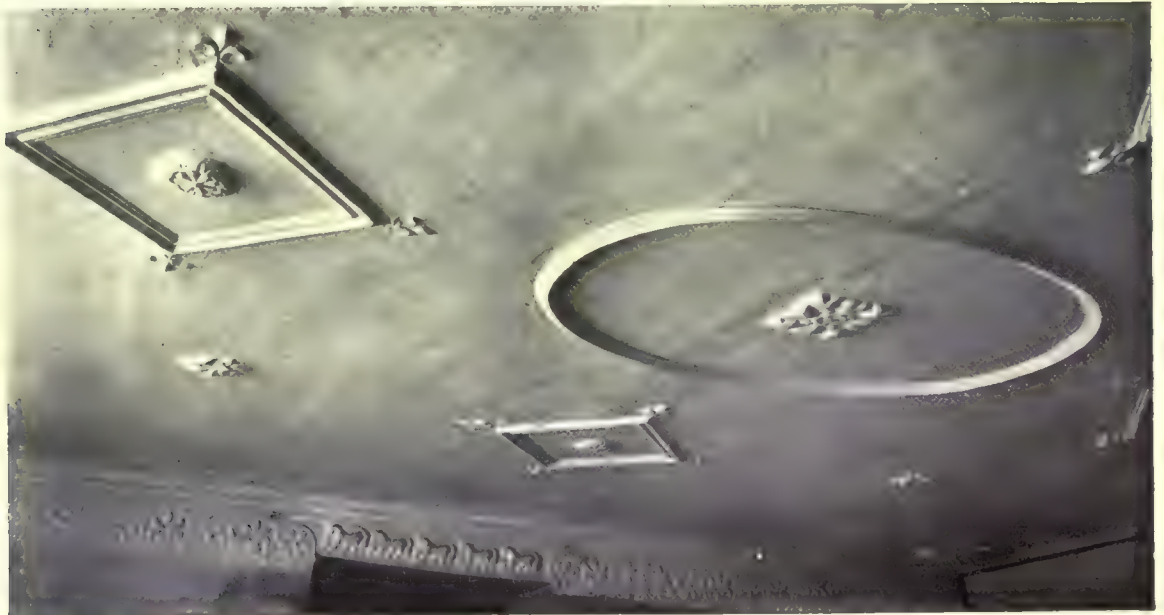
time under the ripe experience and ready ability of Italians, French, and Dutch, with the assistance of native workmen.

But this was not to last long, for the method was too advanced, and the material not what we have in this country, nor ready to hand like the native plaster, so stucco-duro was superseded in course of time by the ordinary plaster, or mortar,





FIG. 129.

FIG. 130.  
DANEWAY HOUSE, CIRENCESTER.

composed of lime, hair, and sand, such as covered the walls and ceilings, and was used for ornamental purposes also, both inside and outside the building.

We have already seen something of its early use in Chapter VI., but the change was not confined to a difference of material only, and will be noticed in the design.

The English workmen were unaccustomed to the decorative disposition and modelling of the

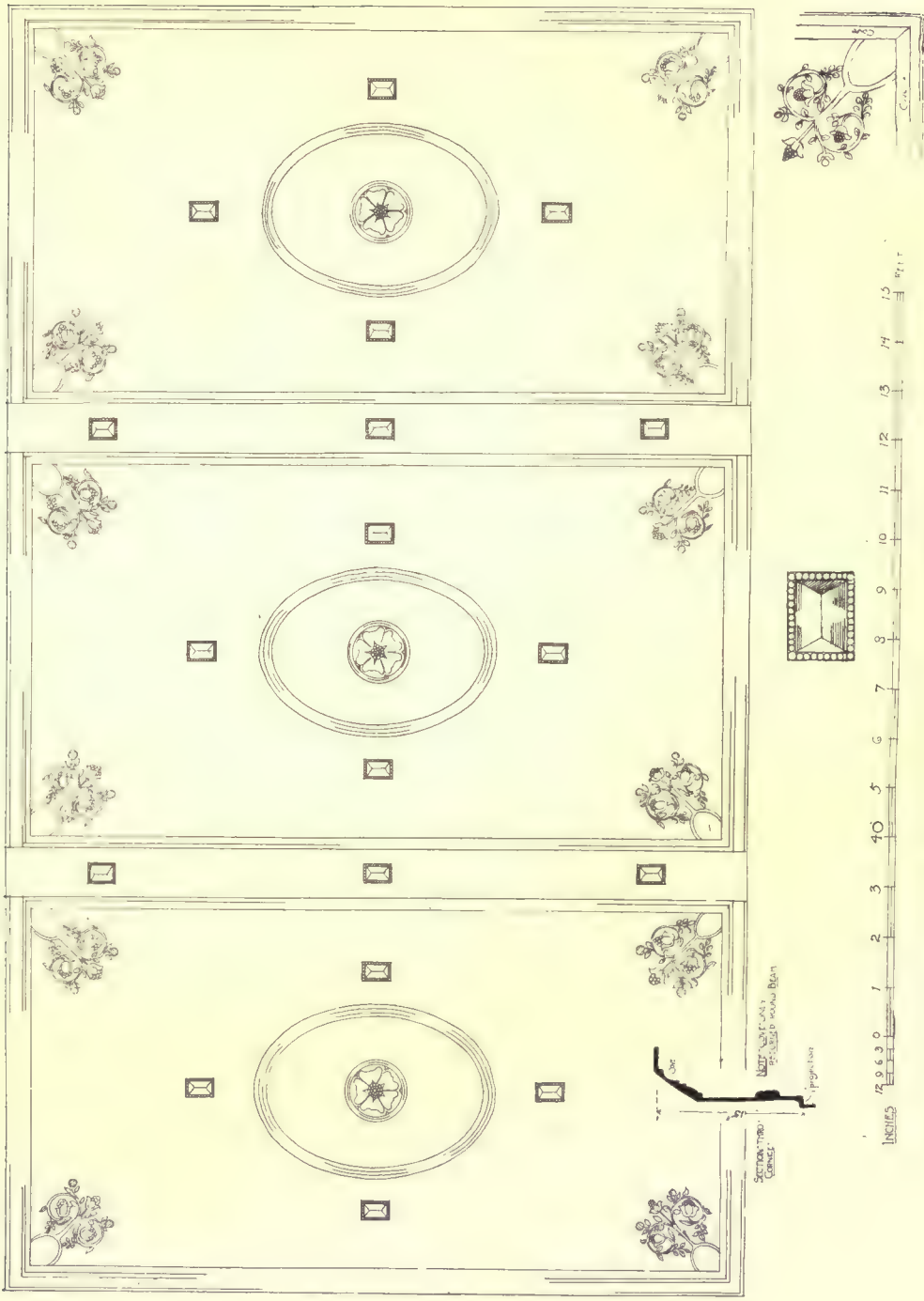


FIG. 131.—Daneway House, Cirencester.



FIG. 132.—Daneway House, Cirencester.





FIGS. 133 and 134.—PLAN AND DETAILS OF BEDROOM CEILING, LIMPURY HILL, GLOUCESTER.

nude figure. The Italian nature was not the English nature, and the latter, left to itself, struck out a line of its own, and ploughed its own furrow.

Externally, decorative work in plaster was a principal feature of many English houses in town and country until the end of the seventeenth century, but the English plasterer made the interior his chief field of decorative operation. From the time of the building of the Palace of Nonesuch hardly a house of any importance was without its modelled frieze, and panelled ceiling of plaster, but the manner of the English plasterer when left to himself was in no way that of the Italian.

The climate was different; the life of the people was different. The great spacious halls and chambers of France and Italy necessitated a more ambitious treatment than the simpler homes of the English people.

The rooms were of less height and smaller in size than those of our neighbours, and the scope of the artist in plaster had corresponding limitations of course, so no more was attempted at first than easily repeated patterns of panelling formed by moulded ribs of plaster.

The panels were small to begin with, growing larger as time went on.

The mouldings were of simple section, the earlier examples being made up of few members, chiefly groupings of beadings, ovolos, and fillets (Fig. 127).

Fleurs-de-lis and small sprigs or pats of primitive modelling were sometimes introduced. At THROUGHAM (Fig. 128) is a very early simple ceiling, by a native hand, of reeded lines terminating in simple sprigs and pateræ, worked *in situ*, in raw parge, apparently with a small metal tool and the fingers. This is one of the earliest ceilings of the kind I can recall.

DANEWAY HOUSE, NEAR CIRENCESTER, contains plaster ceilings of early date.

The ceiling in one room is set with squares and circles alternately, formed by single moulded ribs of simple section connected diagonally and square-wise by ribs of the same detail. The circular centre panel and four surrounding square panels are occupied by wreaths of strong relief, with central bossed rosettes, sprigs, and fleurs-de-lis, radiating inwards and outwards from the mitred ribs of the square panels.

A cornice of modelled vine, and leafage, and flowing stemwork between simple reeded mouldings is carried around the walls, very slightly tilted forward (Fig. 129).

The ceiling of another room is set with a central oval with four diamond-shaped panels of moulded ribs around same, which terminate with small fleurs-de-lis and sprigs.

Larger isolated fleurs-de-lis intervene in the flat of the ceiling—a moulded rib set slightly in from the walls frames up the ceiling, from the mitre angles of which grow modelled sprays (Fig. 130).

The frieze has a modelled honeysuckle pattern in part, and is studded elsewhere with fleurs-de-lis, pinks, circular pateræ, and figures; over the centre of the chimney piece is a large thick-set trout (Fig. 131), and over a door a row of five quaintly modelled horses (Fig. 130).

Another ceiling is divided into three long panels by two beams, cased with modelled enrichments and inner marginal rib mouldings. The flat of the ceiling





FIGS. 135 and 136.—PLANS OF PORTION OF ONE BAY, RIDDLEDEN HALL, KEIGHLEY, YORKS.

panels is set with one elongated oval, with diamond panels at each end, almost touching, and fleur-de-lis terminals from the mitres of same. Tulip and other sprigs grow off the marginal ribs round the main panels at centres between the ovals and diamonds (Fig. 132).

The enrichment of the beam casing takes the square form of the wood beam contained, and has the vine pattern on soffit, and rosette and leafage patterns on the side (Fig. 132).



FIG. 137.—Detail of Portion of a Beam Soffit, Riddlesden Hall.

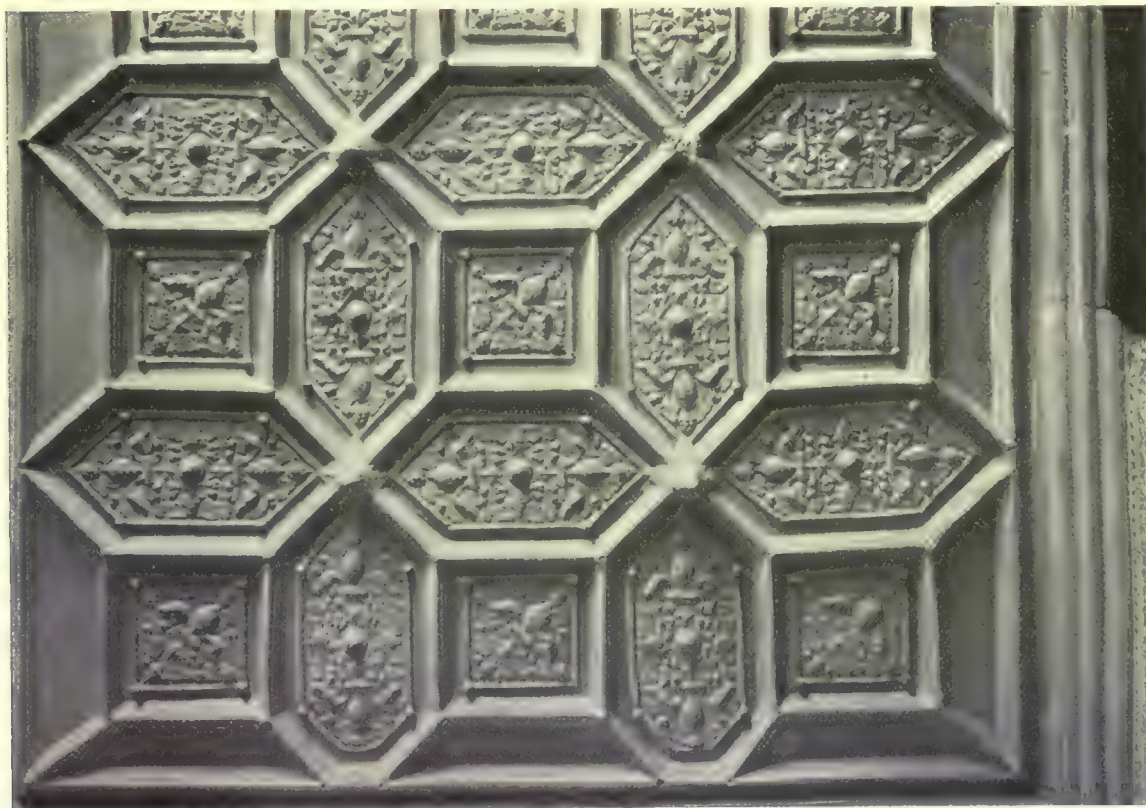


FIG. 138.—Riddlesden Hall, Keighley, Yorks.

At LIMBURY HILL, GLOUCESTER, is another simple ceiling of similar design and date, but with plain moulded cornice (Figs. 133 and 134).



At BARNSTAPLE, NORTH DEVON.—In a room at No. 36 Pilton Street is an interesting treatment of a square room by single ribs of simple mouldings, based on the square placed angle-wise, and subdivided into lesser square panels at the angles and cruciform panels in the centre. The centre dividing rib of the smaller squares is continued out into the corners of the room by a double ogee line terminating with a spray of roses, pinks, marigold, leafage, and cones. These same sprays are repeated in the cruciform central panels, and rosettes are placed in other squares. A pendant boss occupies the central intersection of the ribs.

At RIDDLESDEN OLD HALL, NEAR KEIGHLEY, YORKS, are two rooms containing plaster ceilings of exceptional interest. The rooms are both unoccupied, but the modelling is in excellent preservation.

One room (Figs. 135, 136), rectangular on plan, is divided by three beams,



FIG. 139.—Portion of Ceiling in Front Room of Easternmost House, The Butter Walk, Dartmouth, Devon.

richly encased in modelled plaster, into four bays, within which are small circular and horse-shoe shaped panels connected in two bays square-wise, and in two other bays angle-wise, by short single moulded ribs. It is interesting to note, but it must not be assumed from this remark that the author prefers broken backed circles and other forms, how the marginal rib has led to the contorting of the outer circles in the panels set square-wise into horse-shoe

shaped panels. In the remaining two bays this is managed differently, the marginal horse-shoes being semicircles. The circular and square panel enrichments, fleurs-de-lis, shields, bosses, and sprays of leafage and fruit are very rich in detail, the rib intersections to the horse-shoe panelled bays having mitre leaves, but not so the remaining ones.

The main beams (Fig. 137) are enriched on their soffits with winged lions, their spiral tails being connected by a suggestion of Jacobean strap-work. The beam casing is splayed at a slight angle outwards from the soffit, and quaintly divided by rows of pellets into belts of enrichment, the upper one a design of vine fruit and leaves, off a running stem, and the lower a conventional symmetrical setting of fleurs-de-lis and leafage, flat and lumpy in places.

The ceiling of another room is divided into square and elongated hexagonal lozenges by interlacing octagons of single moulded ribs (Fig. 138).

The square and lozenge panels are filled with enrichment made up of fleurs-de-lis and small leafage; this ceiling is of later date than the ceiling of the other room, and much resembles one at Hampton Court Palace in which the panel enrichments are of cast lead.

There is a moulded cornice round the walls and upper part of the beams—the lower part of the latter and the soffit being encased and enriched with modelling and dividing lines of pellets.

There is a frieze about 16 in. deep of very pleasing design, and softness of modelling, in the free arrangement of flowing stem, leafage, and fruit, but it is now much filled with successive coatings of whitening.

#### *Early Seventeenth Century.*

At TOTNES are some very interesting plaster ceilings of the early seventeenth century, single rib type. There is an interesting ceiling centre of radiating and interlacing ribs forming kite-shaped panels, which contain conventional sprays of leaf and floral design. Sprays of scrolled stem and floral treatment terminate the outer kite panel ribs, and isolated patches of delicate detail grow out of the ceiling nearer the walls between the terminals.

Other TOTNES ceilings of this period combine the connected quatrefoil and the square arrangement of single moulded rib with terminal sprays in panels. The moulded ribs of these ceilings are more carefully shaped and worked, and the plaster



FIG. 140.—House on Butter Walk, Dartmouth, Devon.



of the ceiling is of somewhat finer quality. The setting of the enrichments also shows greater care and skill than in many slightly earlier ceilings. Variations of the square and quatrefoil arrangement connected by short ribs, some interlacing or intersecting, some combined angle-wise or square-wise, some of small pattern gradually expanding in scale, are of frequent occurrence here.

In some houses we see the same patterns worked on waggon-vaulted or barrel-shaped ceilings of segmental section varying in flatness or acuteness of section.

In these cases the panel rib generally springs from a simple moulded cornice crowning a modelled frieze, and the mouldings are picked up at the lunette ends of

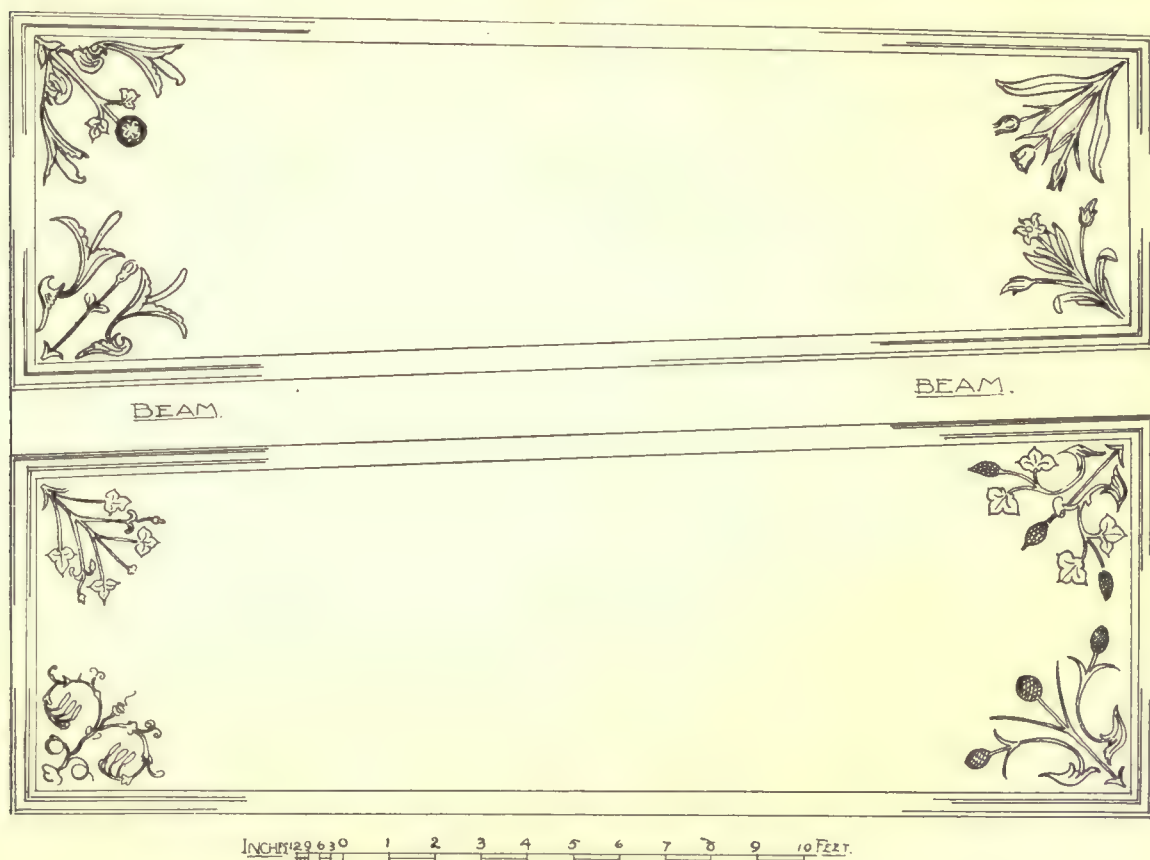


FIG. 141.—Ceiling at No. 67 South Street, Exeter.

room by a flat belt of mouldings, or by taking the cornice round the lunette itself immediately under the ceiling surface.

Fig. 139 shows a nice central arrangement of panels and ribs in the ceiling in THE BUTTER WALK, DARTMOUTH, DEVON, the easternmost house. Fig. 140 shows a square room with a ceiling of quite unique design. The main ceiling area is set with a large square, formed by single moulded ribs breaking into semi-circles on the four sides, and the angles returned into small squares containing figures symbolical of the Evangelists. Lying across one of the semicircles is the figure of Jesse, from whom branches and spirals of vine growth spring, in most of which there are figures of crowned kings; others terminate in spirals of leafage.

Winged heads radiate from the mitres of the moulded ribs forming the four lesser panels at the extremities of the large square. Although primitive in execution, this ceiling is quite unique in idea and in design. At the top of the vine growth in one of the semicircles is a rose, the centre of which contains the figures of the Blessed Madonna and Child.

DARTMOUTH contains other good examples of plasterwork, but lack of space prevents them being illustrated.

EXETER is rich in examples of seventeenth-century plasterwork. An early example is shown in Fig. 141 of the ceiling in No. 67 South Street.

The interest in this case is attached more particularly to the design and modelling of the sprays growing from the mitred angles of the cornice round the two bays, formed by a longitudinal beam. This work is of early date, and the sprays are of much interest.

Numerous examples of the interlacing square and kite-shaped panels formed by single moulded ribs abound in this city, but are now rapidly disappearing. Figs. 142-145 show an interesting variety of this. Fig. 142 gives a large central treatment in a ceiling of a house on Exe Island, the ribs of which remind one of the example illustrated in Fig. 140, and of another ceiling in High Street, Barnstaple, which limited space forbids showing here,

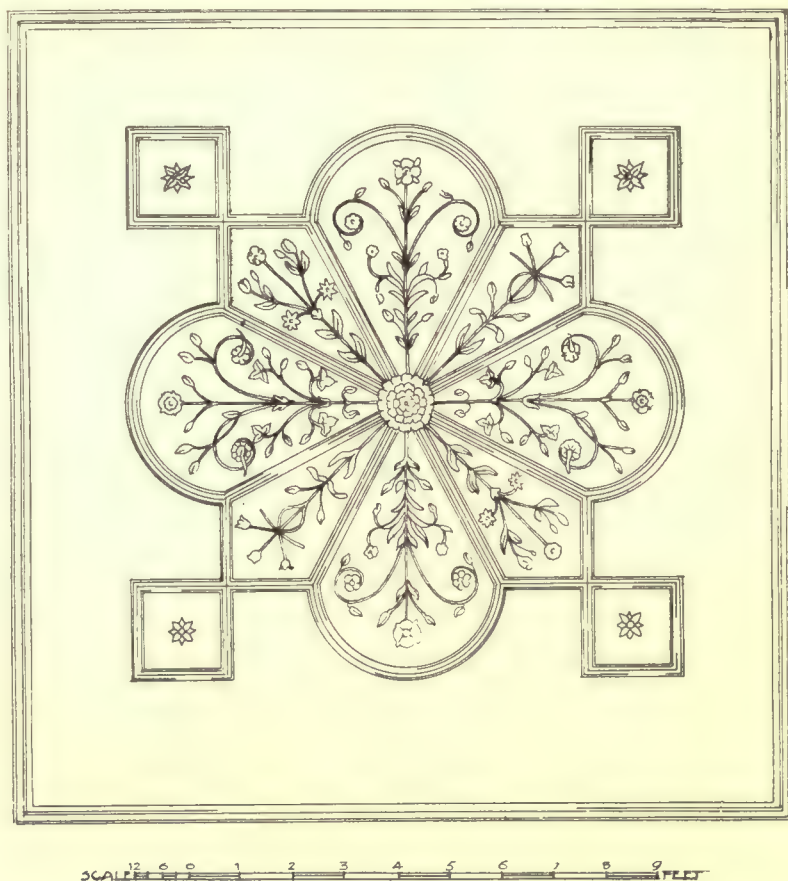
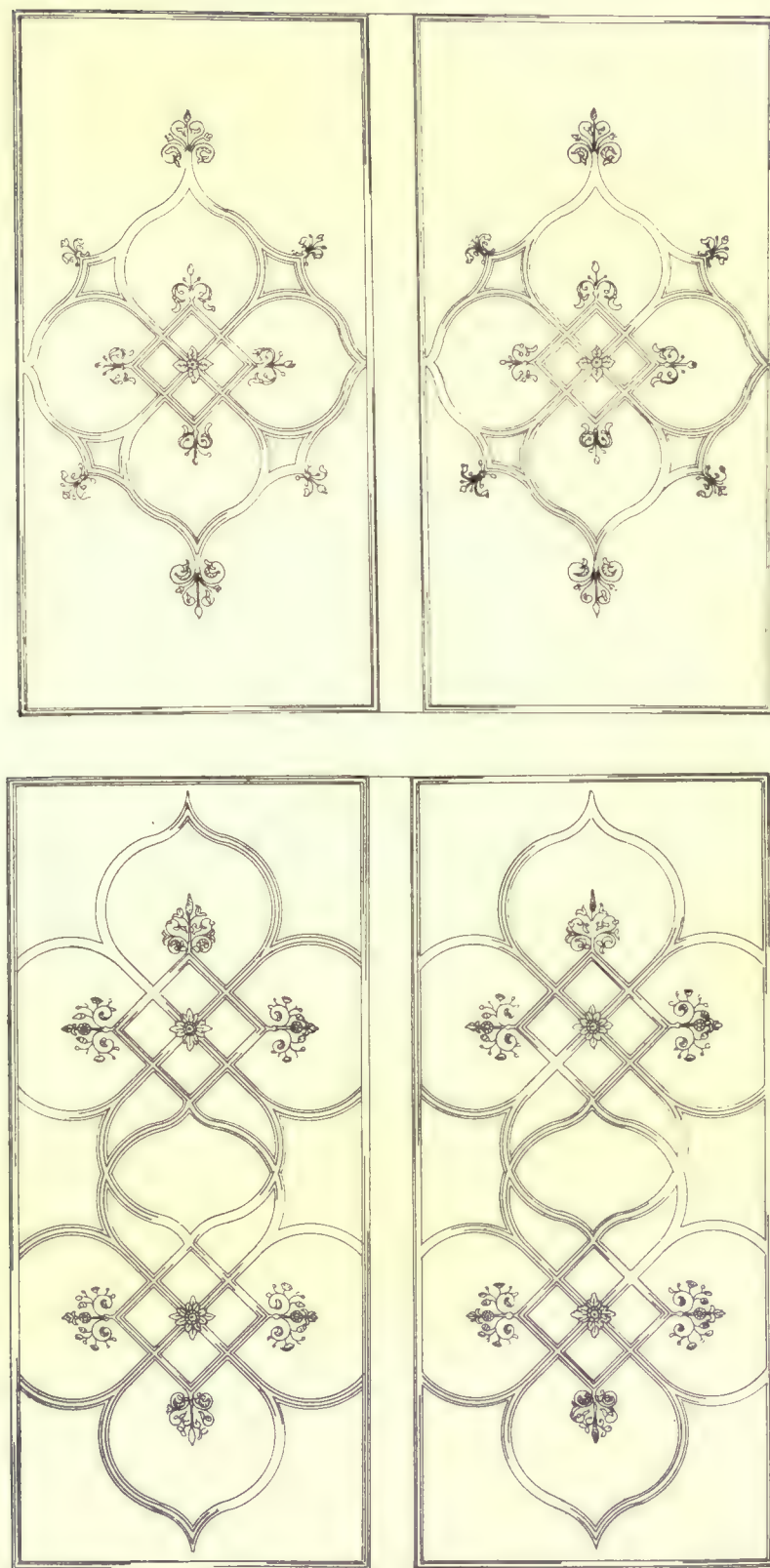


FIG. 142.—At Exe Island, Exeter.

which has better design and detail in the modelled sprays of the kite-shaped panels. The small square panels at the angles of the larger square are also a pleasing feature in addition to the pendentive. Two more illustrations of ceilings from Gandy Street and St Nicholas' Priory (Figs. 146 and 147) are shown herewith.

Unenriched moulded ribs of increased width are to be found in the MANOR HOUSE, WEST DOWN, ILFRACOMBE, and may be seen in Fig. 111, p. 78; at TOTNES; ALDWARK, YORK; ASTON HALL; HOUSE AT GREAT YARMOUTH; STAR HOTEL, YARMOUTH; MR BLAKE'S OFFICE, THE QUAY, YARMOUTH; MR HOLME'S





SCALE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 FEET

FIG. 143.—BAMPEYLDE HOUSE, EXETER.

HOUSE, HULL; HARDWICK HALL (long gallery), DERBYSHIRE; BURTON AGNES, YORKS.

Examples of the design of this period are to be found in nearly every house and baronial hall erected at this time throughout the kingdom.

The development of the pendentive with panel ornaments is clearly shown in

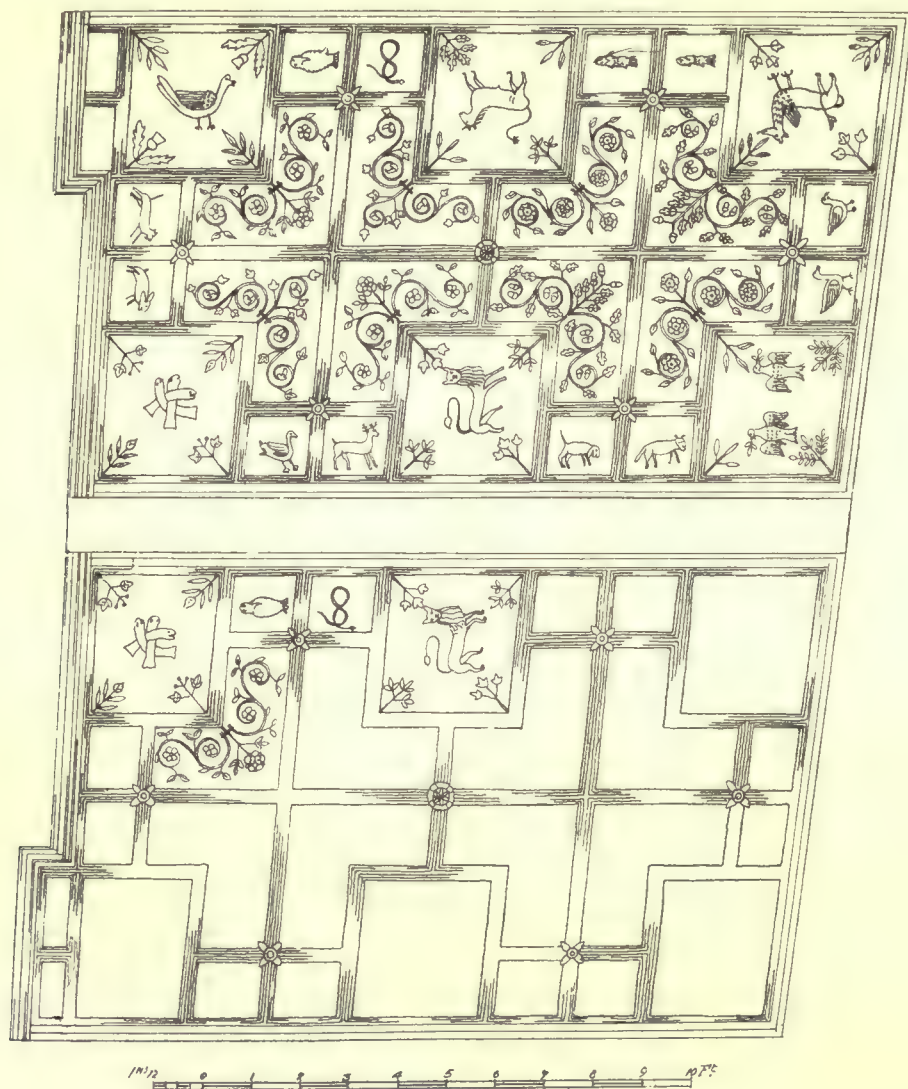


FIG. 144.—From the "Courtenay Arms," Exeter.

Figs. 148-150, from Sizergh Hall, Westmorland, in which we observe on a larger scale something of the primitive nature of the modelling of the sprigs in the earlier work, and of the working of the single moulded rib of the period immediately foregoing the widening of the rib.

At HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE (1540-45), are many interesting plaster ceilings of quatrefoil panellings by single moulded ribs. The ballroom or long gallery,



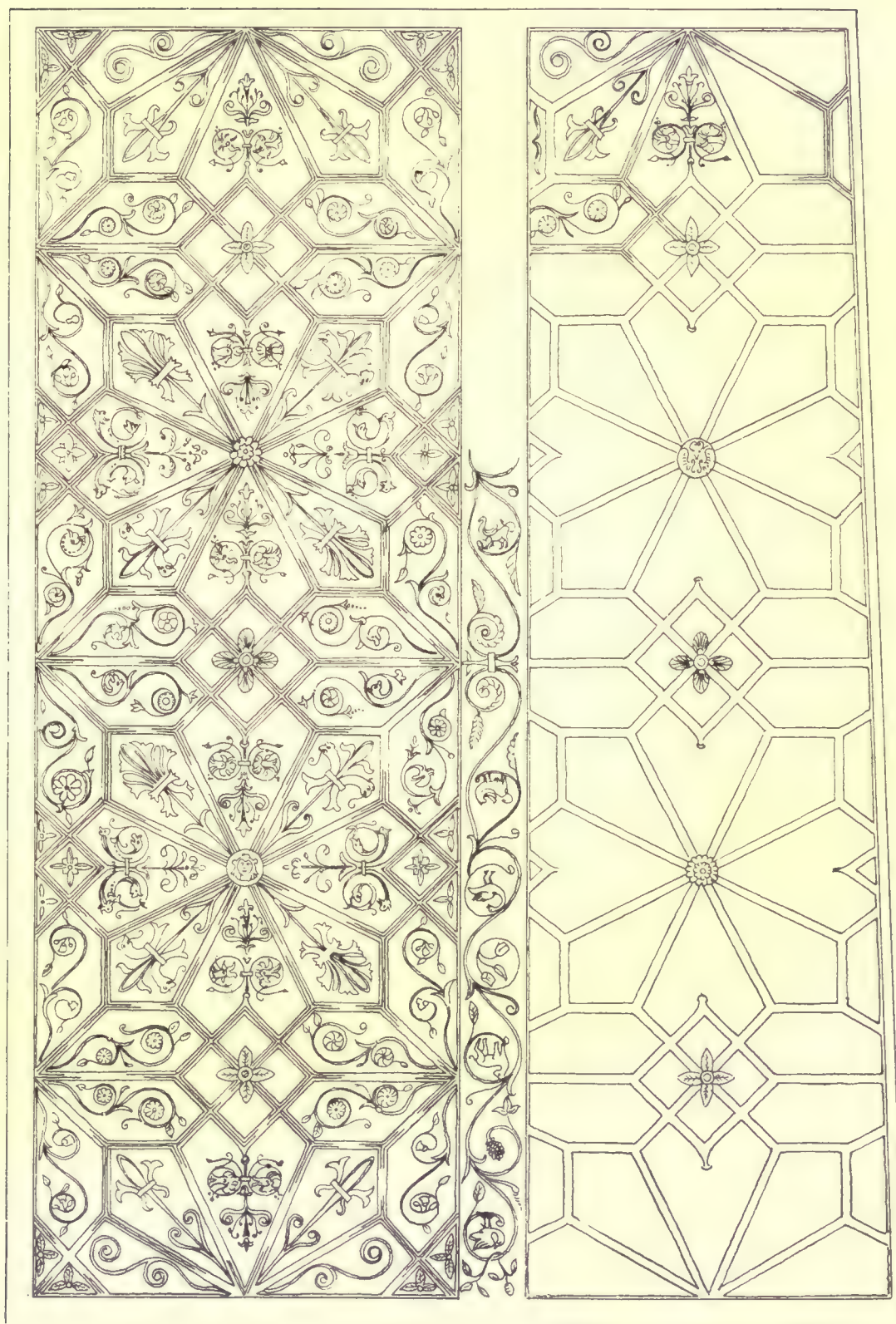


FIG. 145.—EAGLE BREWERY, NORTH STREET, EXETER.

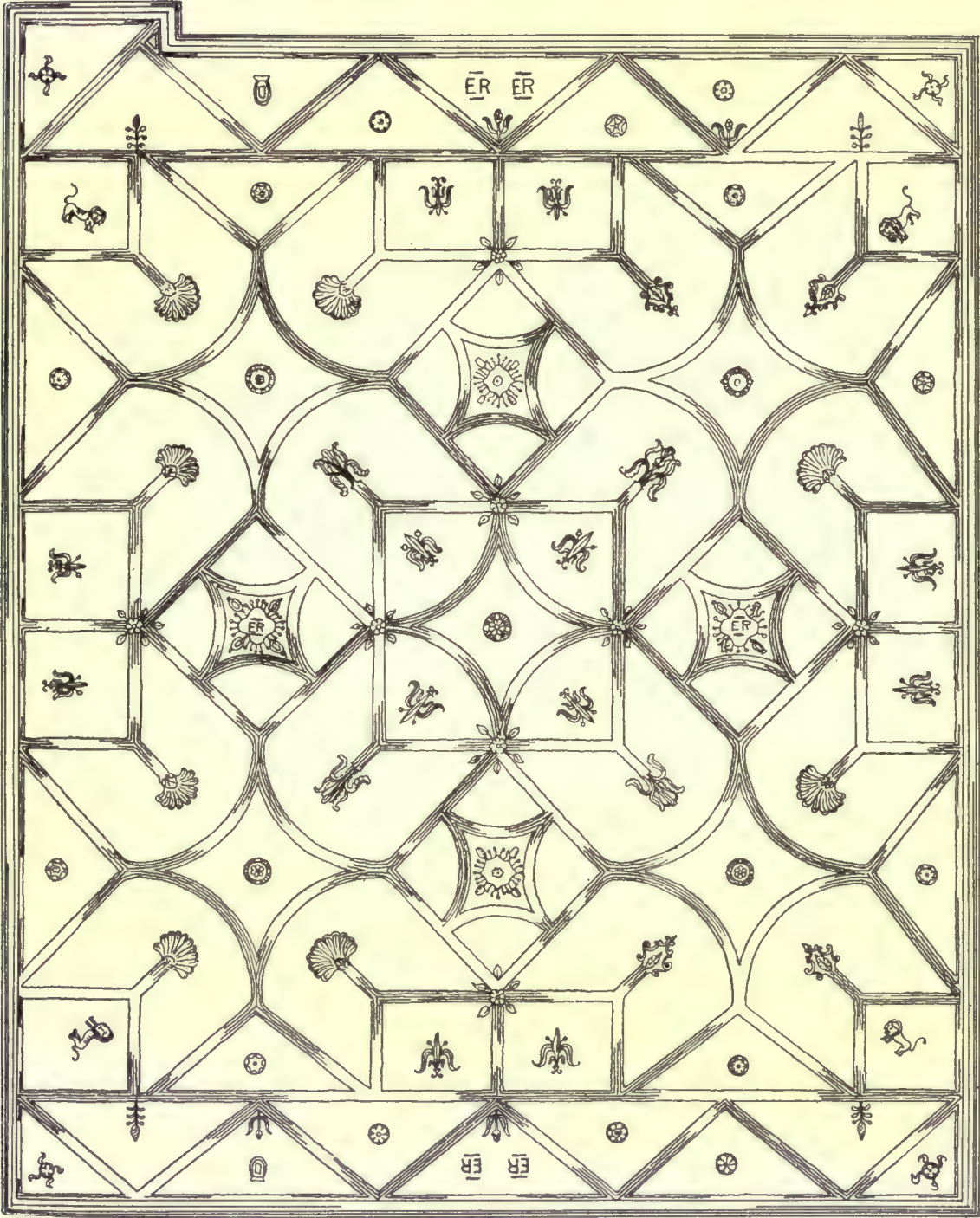
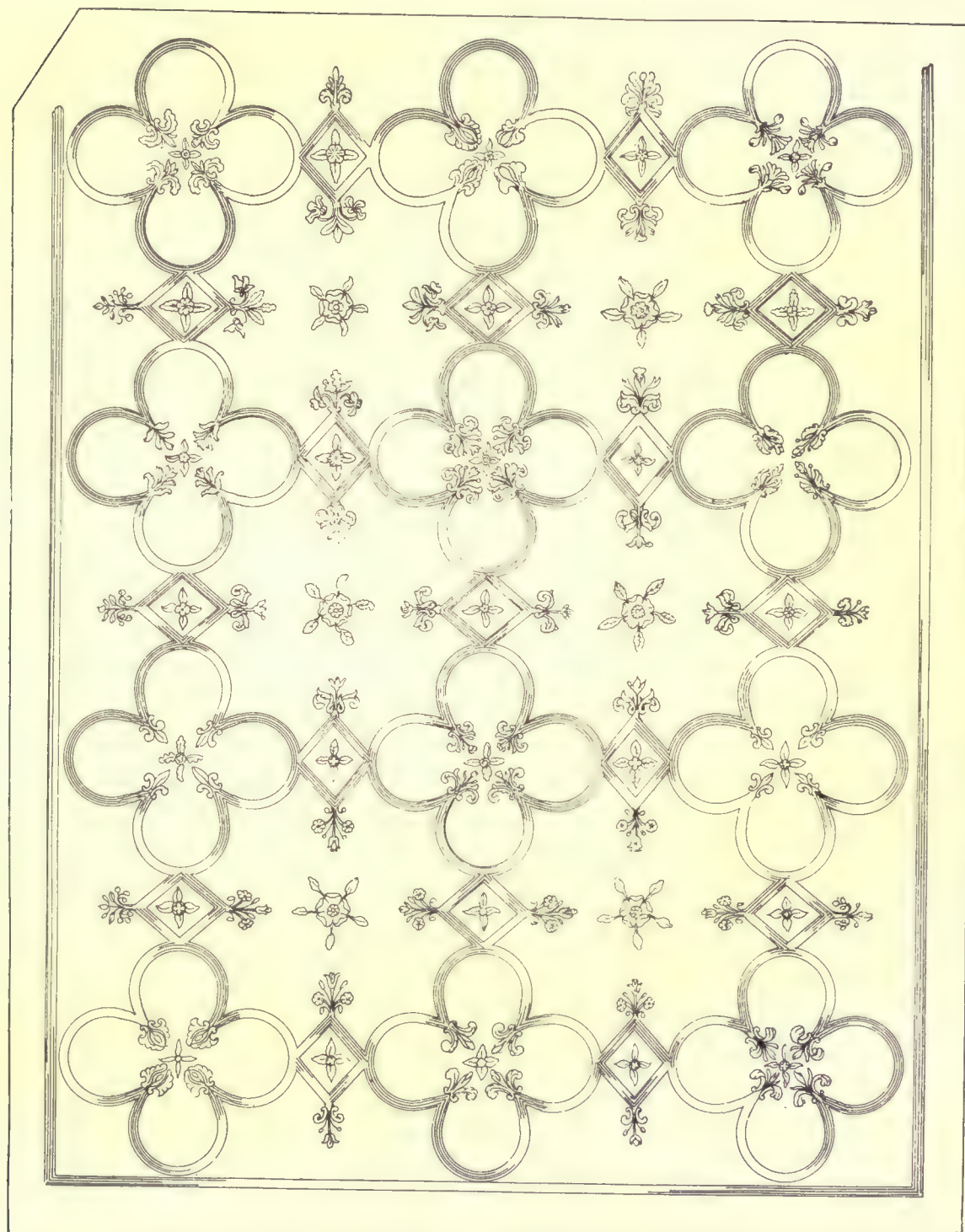


FIG. 146.—GANDY STREET, EXETER.



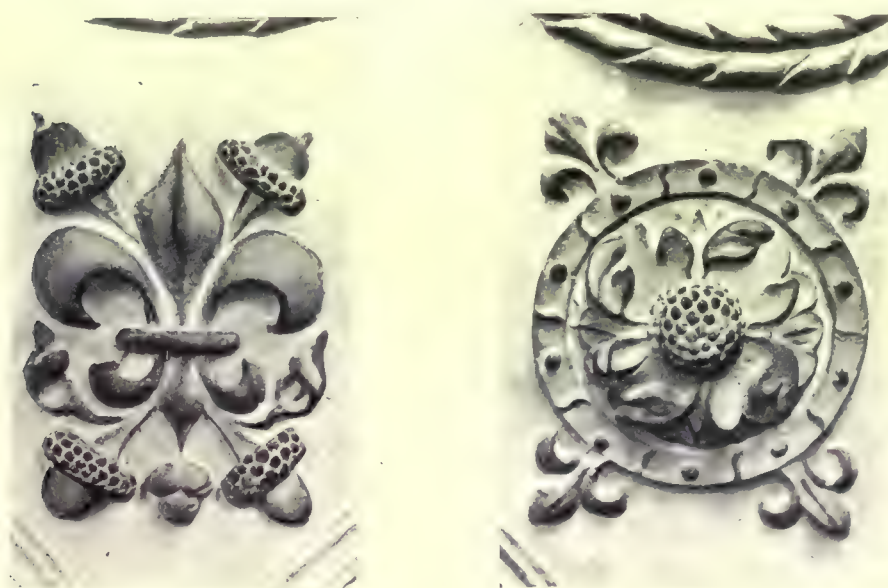


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FIG. 147.—ST NICHOLAS' PRIORY, EXETER.



FIG. 148.—Portion of Pendentive Ceiling, Sizergh Hall, Westmorland.



FIGS. 149 and 150.—Ceiling Details from Sizergh Hall.



110 ft. by 17 ft., has a ceiling coved at the sides, down which the mouldings continue; the panels contain the boar's head and the peacock—the family badges.

The tower over the gateway has a room on each floor possessing plaster ceilings with cross beams dividing the ceiling area into four main panels (Figs. 151 and 152), which are subdivided by moulded single ribs into quatrefoiled panels, having modelled terminal sprays of spirited design, and enriched bosses (Fig. 153). The

deep-canted moulded and enriched beams of plaster are quite distinct in treatment from any that I have seen elsewhere. The soffit is narrow, moulded, and enriched, and the sides, half moulded and half studded with small rosettes, rake out well into the panels (see section, Fig. 153).

Part of the depth of the canted beam sides is taken round the panels on the walls as a cornice (see elevation, Fig. 152) in the lower room.

The ceiling in the upper chamber (Fig. 154) is similar and quite as nice as that above described. The two cross beams are of slightly different section and moulded, but without enrichment on soffit or sides.

Vigorously modelled sprays of fleur-de-lis leafage spring from the

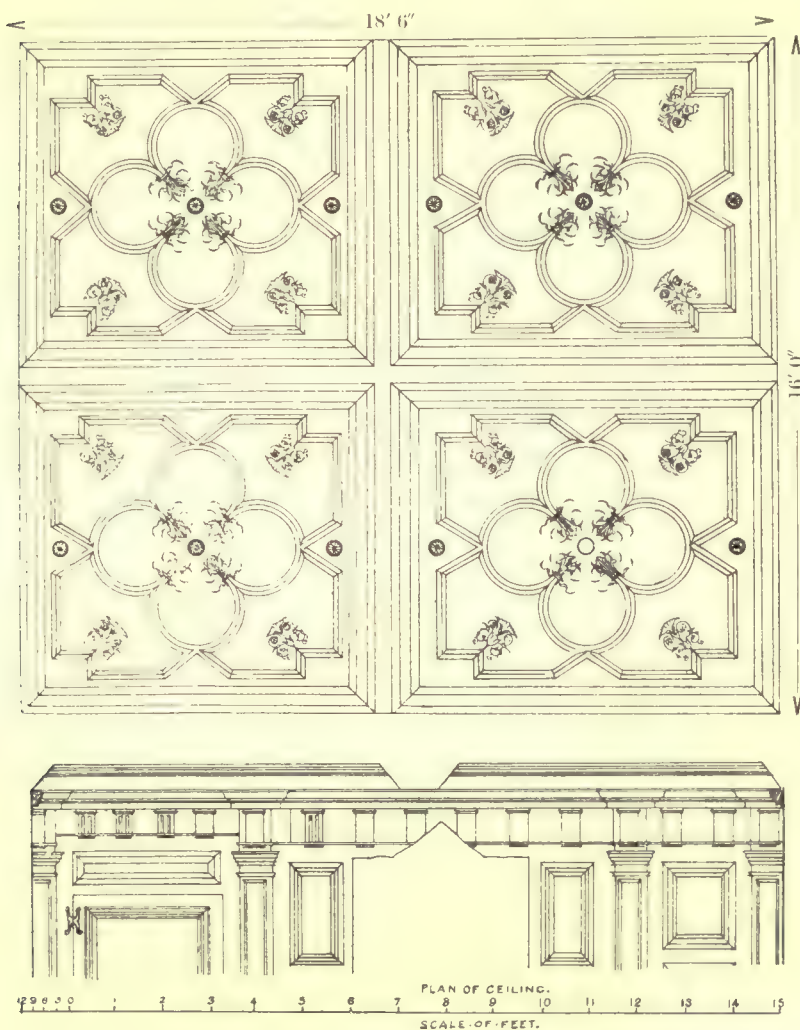


FIG. 151.—Plan of First-Floor Room over Gateway, Haddon Hall, Derbyshire.

FIG. 152.—Frieze and Mouldings of Fig. 151.

mitred angles of the moulded ribs, while the lesser panels contain equally spirited bosses and other ornaments.

WESTWOOD MANOR HOUSE, BRADFORD-ON-AVON, WILTS (about 1570-75 A.D.), has a ceiling in the drawing-room divided up by moulded wood ribs into panels about 3 ft. 6 in. square, each holding a cast-plaster enrichment or patera about 12 in. across, rosettes about 13 in. diameter, or rectangular sprays of fruit about 20 in. by

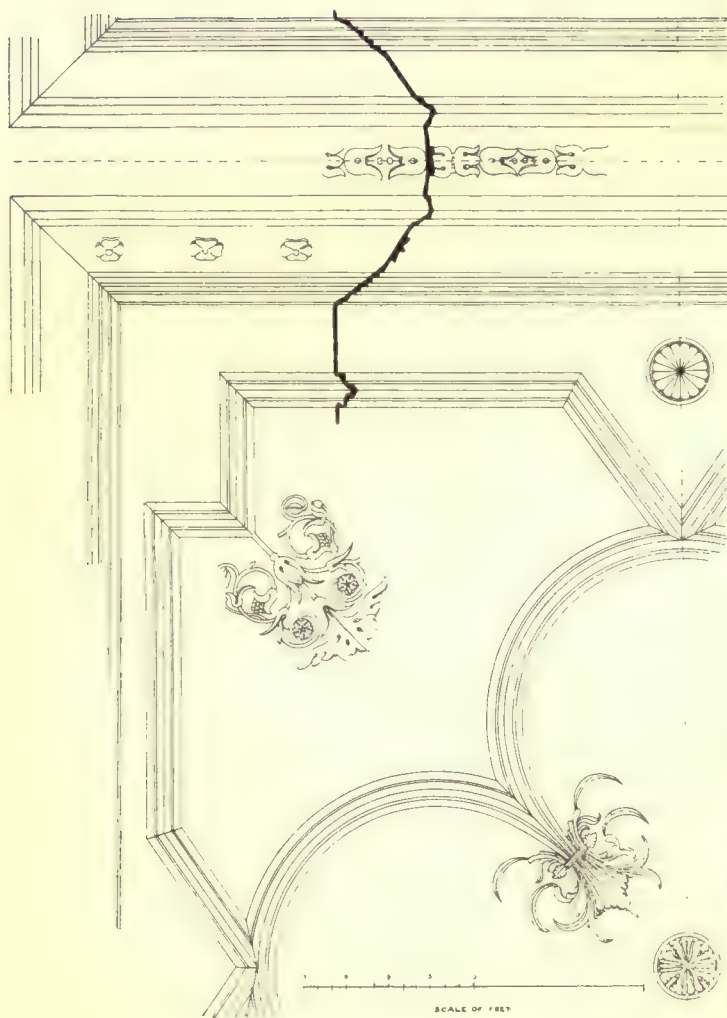


FIG. 153.—Detail of Ceiling shown in Fig. 151.

of the Wynnes in the panel spaces.

These comprise lions, boars, winged lions and dragons, masks, herons, swans, owls, stag heads, stags, rosettes, and fleurs-de-lis.

The design and modelling of these (exemplified in Figs. 155-161 and 163) are most decorative and interesting, and are full of strength, vigour, detail, and action. They are peculiarly decorative in the modelling.

These forms are introduced

10 in. The relief, now much filled with whitening, is of somewhat primitive character, and cast from moulds of plaster. The general shape of the cast is not concealed in the setting of the pateræ in the ceiling panels.

PLAS MAWR, CONWAY, WALES, has several rooms containing ceilings, overmantels, and wall decorations in plaster. The house was originally the home of the Wynne family, and was visited by Queen Elizabeth.

The room known as the Queen's bedroom has a ceiling with single ribs of mouldings radiating from enriched bosses, with leaves covering the inter-sections, and the heraldic crests

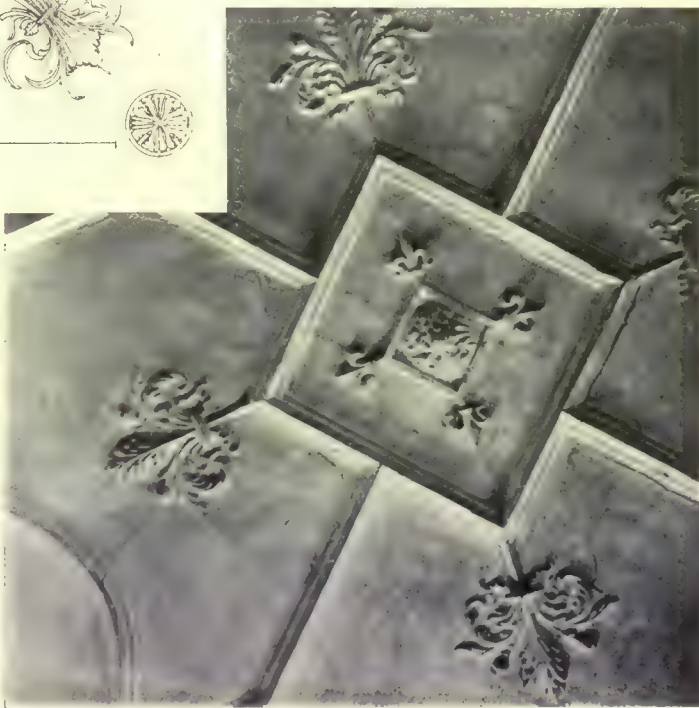


FIG. 154.—Portion of a Ceiling, Second Floor, over Entrance Gateway, Haddon Hall, Derbyshire.





FIG. 155.

into the wall space between the wood panelling and the ceiling in a quaint spotted arrangement connected at intervals by crossed filleted bars.

Fig. 162 shows another example of good decorative heraldry from a house at Barnstaple, North Devon.

*Queen Elizabeth's Bedroom, Plas Mawr, Conway.*—The chimney overmantel is a simple arrangement of parge modelling with central shield, two circles containing the letters R. G., and horses and bosses between.

*Queen Elizabeth's Sitting-room* has another ceiling of radiating ribs of more

simple arrangement with the same bosses, fleurs-de-lis, animals, and birds as before, but more quietly dispersed.

FIG. 156.



FIG. 157



FIG. 158.



FIG. 159.

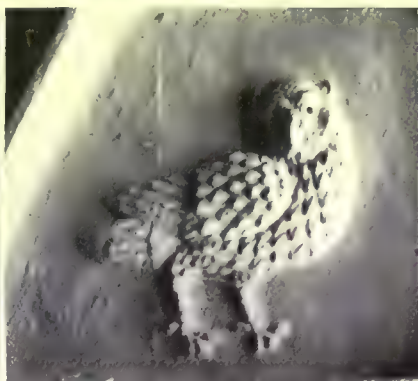


FIG. 160.



FIG. 161.

FIGS. 155-161.—Types of Heraldic Details from Ceilings, Plas Mawr, Conway, North Wales.

The wall space is also treated in another way with the same heraldic forms (Fig. 164).

The chimney overmantel is divided by beads into nine panels flanked by enriched turret-like three-quarter pillars, the Royal Arms, bearers, and crown on the centre panel, and E. R. on shields left and right. The top left panel contains a chained portcullis.

The other panels are occupied with rosettes and bosses. A narrow enriched plaster cornice runs across the top. This and a small portion of the ceiling is shown on Fig. 163.

*The Banqueting Hall* (1590) has an interesting ceiling of plain moulded ribs radiating from strong lumpy rosette bosses (Fig. 165). The panels of this ceiling are quite plain, but there is an interesting enriched cornice of plaster, the top member of which receives the mouldings of the ribs. This room has a very interesting chimney overmantel (Fig. 166) made up of the ornaments used in the ceilings of all the rooms in the house; the cross bar carrying the central shield bears the date 1580.

*The Drawing-room* (Fig. 168) contains another interesting example of the rib ceiling where the radiation is from flat circular plaques or shields containing the heraldic bearings. The rib inter-sections in places have tiny bosses, and cover leaves (Fig. 170, p. 113).

The cornice is similar in character to that of the Banquet Hall (Fig. 166), but not the same in section as that shown on Fig. 167 of the chimney piece in same room.

*The Wynne Room* has a ceiling of different setting from the radiating system (Fig. 169).

Two large squares occupy the centre of ceiling, and from the outer square springs a large quatrefoil. The inner square contains a shield having the Wynne arms and fleurs-de-lis in the angle panels. The idea of the interlacing quatrefoil is developed in the plan of the ribs on the ceiling round the centre squares,



FIG. 162.—Heraldic Panel from a House in Barnstaple, North Devon.



and the panels have the same bosses and masks and rosettes as elsewhere in the house.

The chimney frontal (Fig. 169) in this room has two enriched three-quarter pillars of plaster rising from the stone bracket blocks. A large shield occupies the



FIG. 163.—Plaster Overmantel and Frieze, Queen's Sitting-room, Plas Mawr, Conway, North Wales.

whole of the centre, leaving only three small panels on either side, with the initials R. G. and the date 1577. The shield is quartered by beaded lines with the three spread eagles, three stags' heads, three masks, and three fleurs-de-lis with chevron.

Other illustrations of the single ribs are shown in Figs. 171-185, Figs. 186 and 187 give some details, and in other figures in the chapter on Scottish work.

The next development of the moulded rib is shown in Fig. 188, where the mouldings are divided by a plain, narrow, hollow member.

On the second floor of EASTGATE HOUSE, ROCHESTER, KENT (Figs. 172 and 173), is an interesting single rib ceiling made up of interlacing kite-shape and cruciform panels containing heraldic rampant lions and shields in strap-work framings, and mermaids. This ceiling seems to be of rather later date.

At DEANE HALL, NORTHANTS (1584), are two very excellent ceilings of Elizabethan work, but of rather different treatment to the general type we have been illustrating. The old dining-room ceiling (Fig. 189) is made up of large intersecting circular panels containing lesser ones connected by broad cross ribs. The ribs are moulded and plain, the enrichment being confined to the margin of the panels with



FIG. 164.—Wall Panelling and Portion of Ceiling in Queen Elizabeth's Room, Plas Mawr, Conway, N. Wales.



FIG. 165.—Portion of Ceiling in Banqueting Hall, Plas Mawr, Conway.





FIG. 166.—Plaster Overmantel, Banqueting Hall, Plas Mawr, Conway, N. Wales

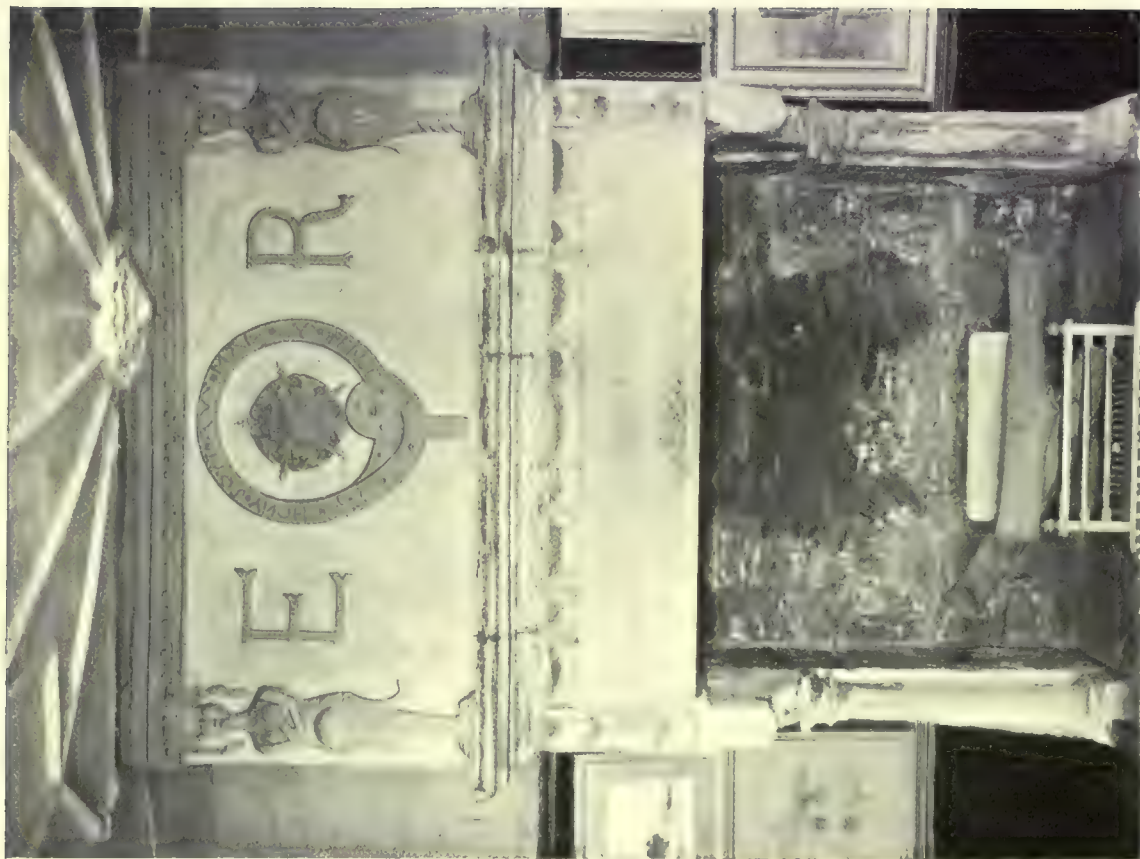


FIG. 167.—Plaster Overmantel, Cornice, &c., in Drawing-room, Plas Mawr, Conway, N. Wales.



FIG. 168.—Drawing-room Ceiling and Frieze, Plas Mawr, Conway, N. Wales.



FIG. 169.—Ceiling and Frieze in the Wynne Room, Plas Mawr, Conway, N. Wales.





FIGS 172 and 173.—Eastgate House, Rochester, Kent.

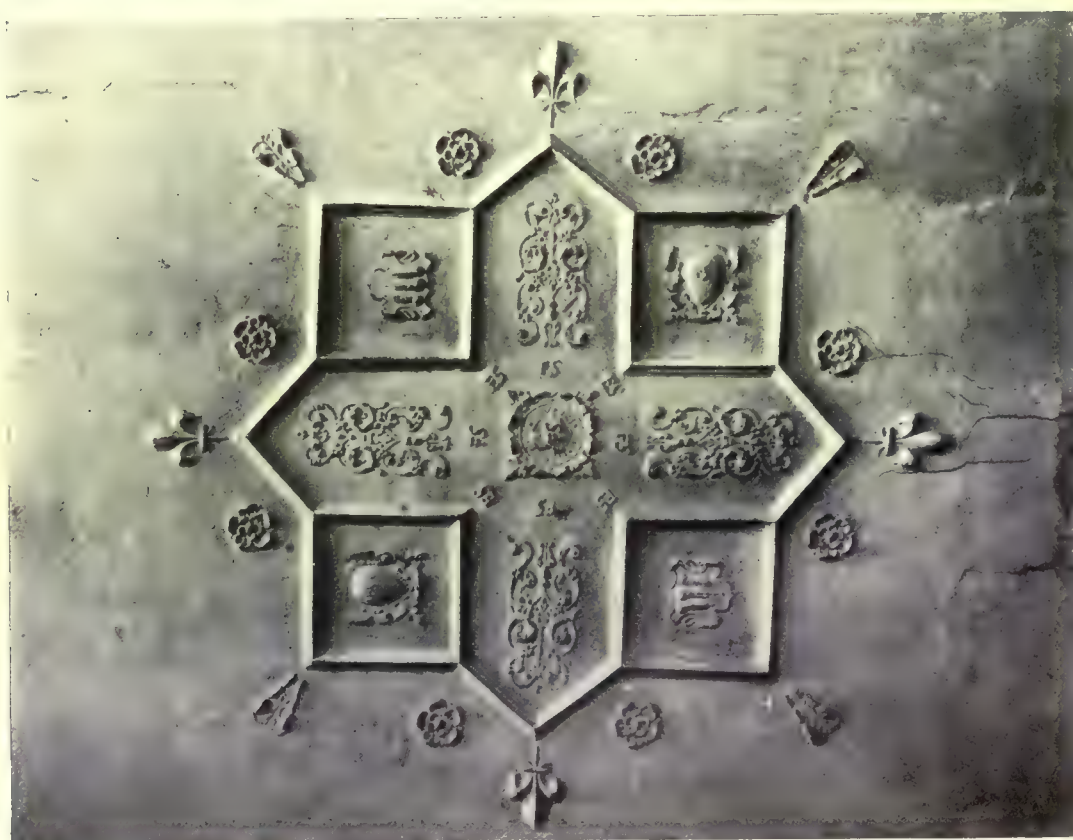


FIG. 171.—Dining-room Ceiling Centre, Wilderhope House, near Shrewsbury.

the Cardigan arms on scrolled shields inside. Pendants are placed at the centres of the intersections. Between the deep mouldings and the long pendants the proportion is well maintained.

The ceiling of a bedroom is very similar to that of the old dining-room, but the moulded ribs are different and narrower. The armorial bearings in the quadrant panels are of different detail, and the rosettes are double instead of single (Figs. 190 and 191).

KING JAMES' BEDROOM AT KNOLE, KENT (house 1570, 1603-8), has a fine ceiling of later Elizabethan or very early Jacobean workmanship (Figs. 192 and 193). It is divided into sixteen large square panels by shallow beams moulded at sides, and enriched on the broad soffits with a running pattern of well-modelled vine. The beams are about 6 ft. from centre to centre, and mitre into three-quarter beams round the walls with the same pattern modelled on the soffits of the same.

The centre of each panel is occupied by a circular wreath of rounded section, modelled with laurel leaves and berries, bound round at intervals with strap-work, and inside them is a circular floral enrichment. The angles of the panels are filled with sprays of fruit and leafage about 1 ft. 6 in.

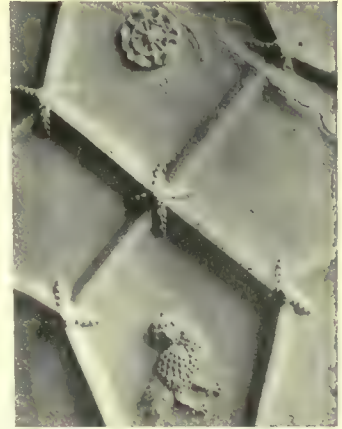


FIG. 170.—Boss and Mitre Leaves, Plas Mawr.



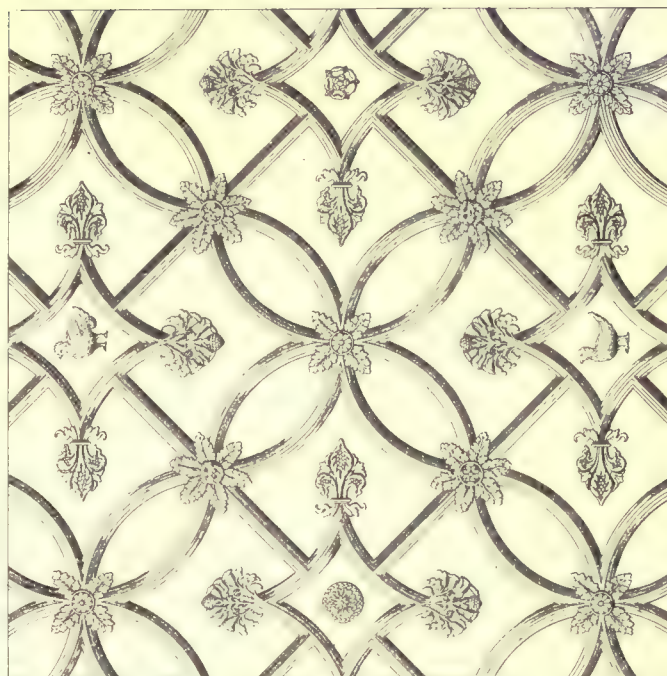
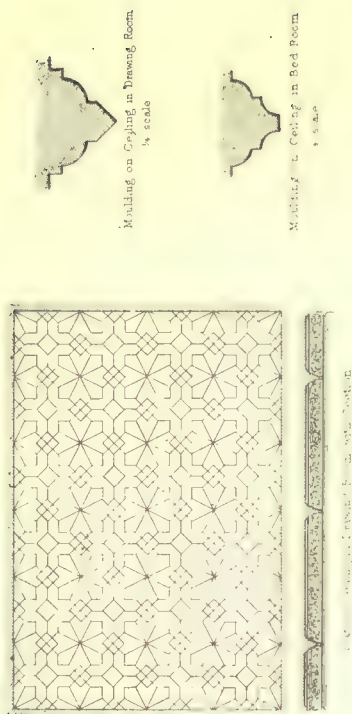
FIG. 174.—Portion of Ceiling from Sir Paul Pindar's House, Bishopsgate, now in Victoria and Albert Museum. For Illustrations of Panels, see Figs. 265 and 266.

by 1 ft. 6 in. This ceiling, as indeed all the others at Knole, is in a state of excellent preservation.

The ceiling of the long gallery may well be considered one of the finest examples of the plasterer's art at this period (Fig. 194).

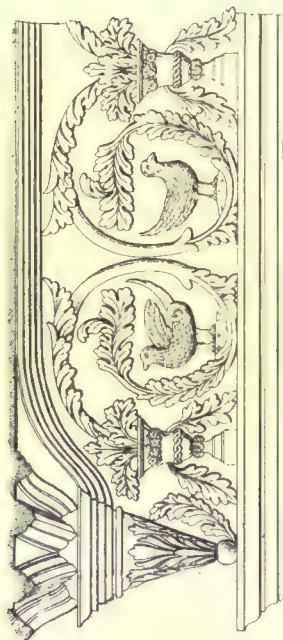
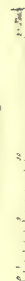
The whole flat area of this ceiling is panelled by broad moulded and enriched



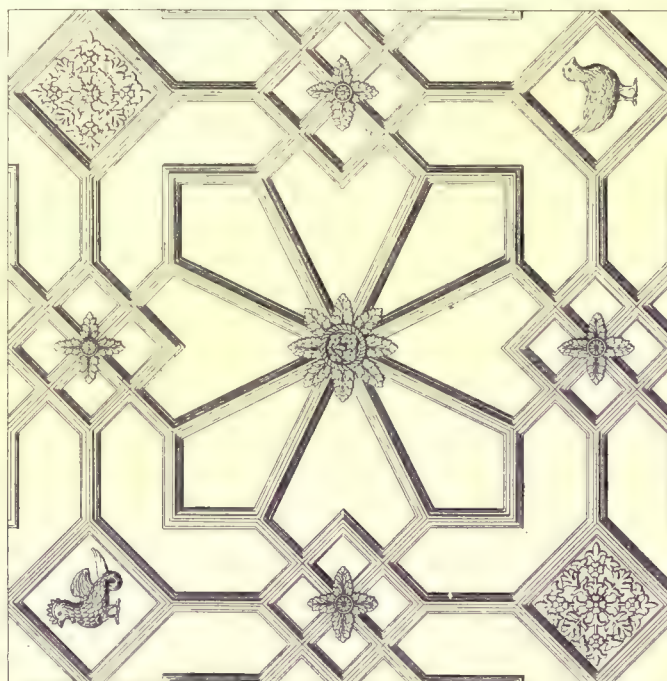


Portion of Ceiling in Bed Room with Section

Scale for Ceiling



Portion of Frieze in Dining Room

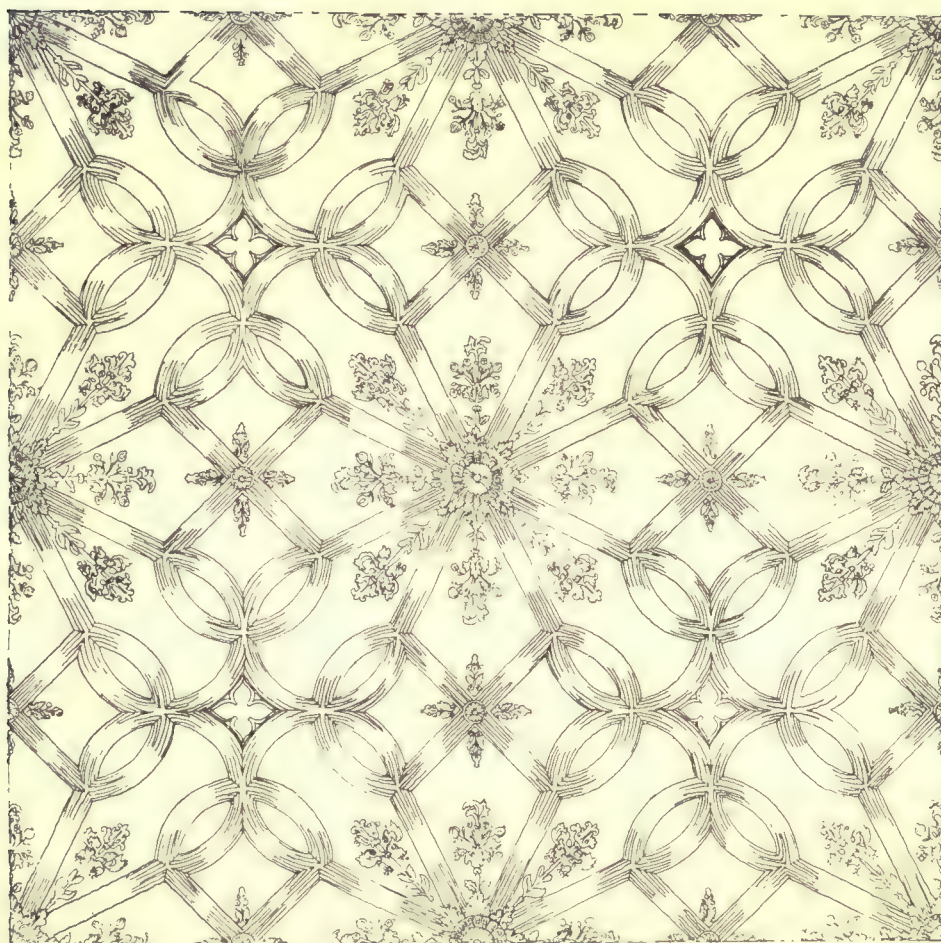


Portion of Ceiling in Drawing Room with Section

Scale for Porticoes at large



FIGS. 175-178.—TWO CEILINGS, &C., AT LOSELEY PARK, SURREY.



1 inch 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Feet

SCALE

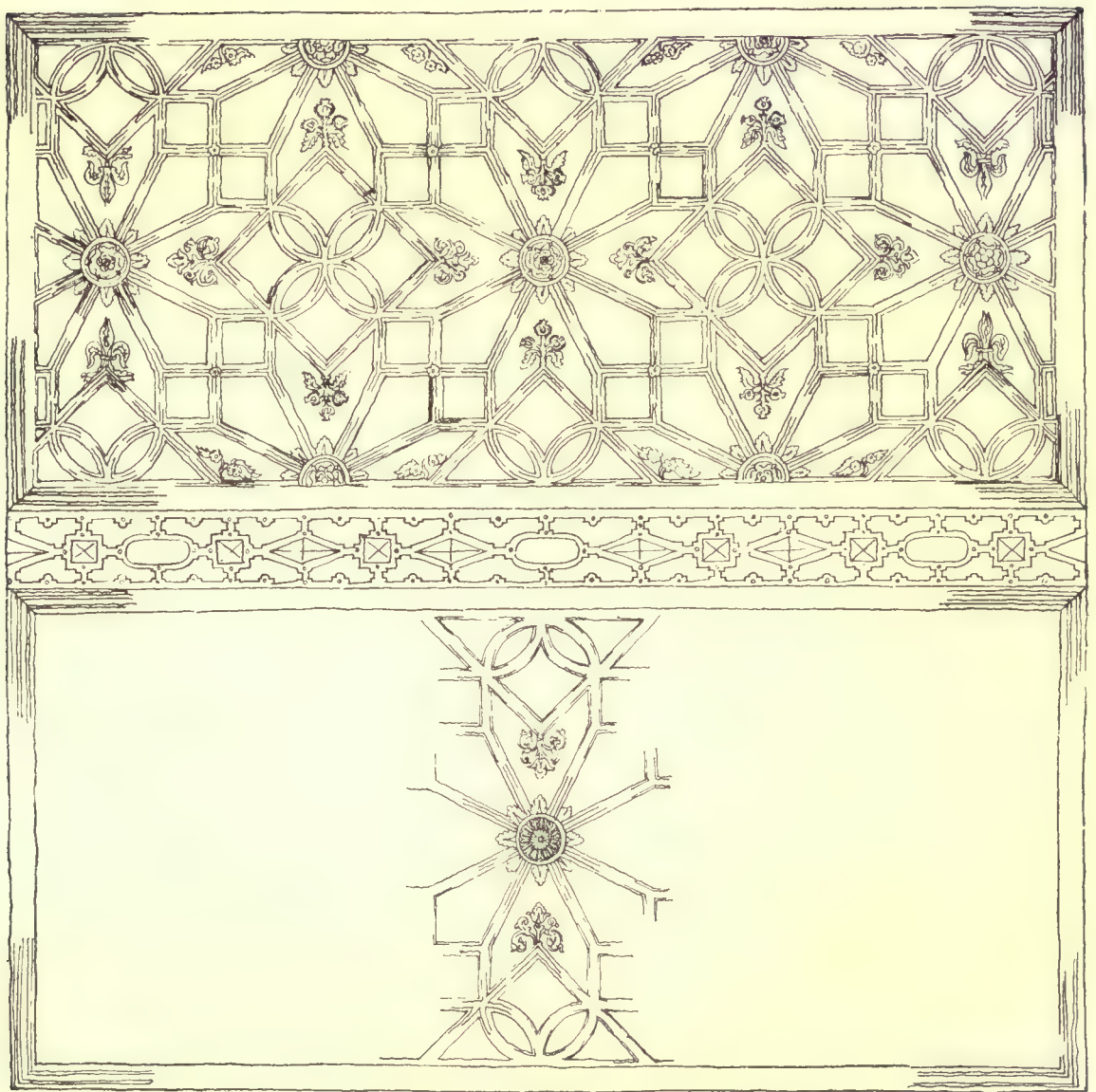
SCALE 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Feet

DETAILS OF CEILING ENRICHMENTS.

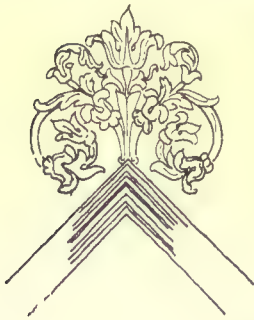


FIG. 179.—PORTION OF A CEILING, RED LODGE, PARK ROW, BRISTOL.





SCALE  $\frac{1}{2}$  INCH = 1 FOOT



### DETAILS OF CEILING ENRICHMENTS.

FIG. 180.—SEXTON'S HOUSE, ST JAMES', BRISTOL.

ribs flowing from end to end in a symmetrical and intersecting mesh of wavy lines forming panels (see illustration; illustrated also by Mr Gotch in "Architecture of the Renaissance in England"). The panels thus formed are filled with branched sprays of pink, rose, lily, honeysuckle, marigold, columbine, oak, and other growths, excellently modelled in a conventional manner, and partaking of natural form only so far as the medium allowed them to do so. The room is high, and, in view of the fact, the modelling of the running vine pattern is open, strong, and free.

SPEKE HALL, LANCASHIRE (1605).—The dining-room has a fine ceiling of late Elizabethan or early Jacobean date. The ceiling area is divided into large square panels by wood beams encased in plaster; the upper portions of these beams carry a moulded cornice which is carried round each panel on the walls, and along the lesser

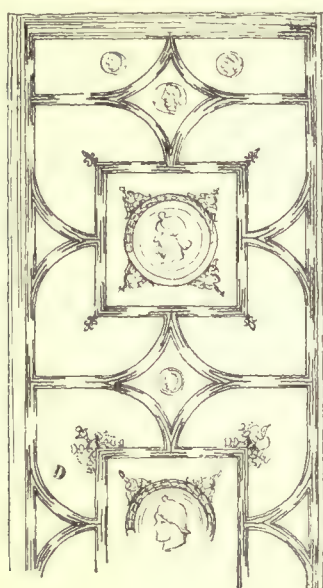


FIG. 181.—Ceiling under Gallery over Staircase.

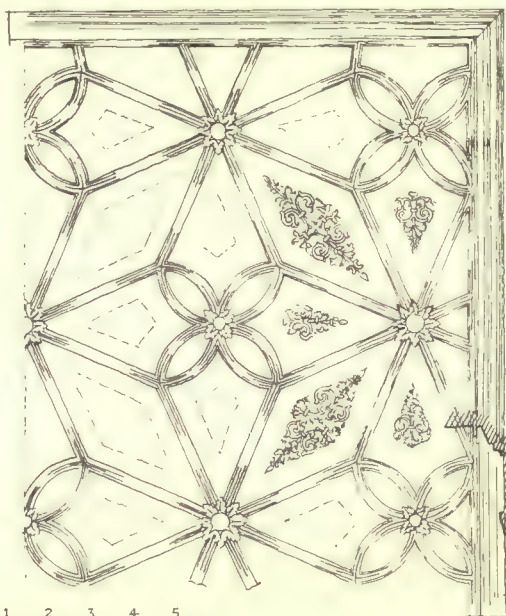


FIG. 182.—Ceiling of Staircase Hall (quarter only drawn).

SCALE OF FEET  
1 0 1 2 3 4 5

CEILINGS AT MAPLEDURHAM HOUSE, OXFORDSHIRE.

cross beams which are soffited and enriched immediately under this level. The lower part of the transverse beams are enriched with a flowing hop vine which grows round the girth of the "adzed" underside of the beams.

The large panels are worked all over with a festooning of vigorously modelled rose and vine branching out from a central root, with bosses of grape and rose depending from their respective centres. This modelling is quite exceptionally interesting both in its design, and in the freedom of its execution.

The work of the English plasterer was at its zenith then, and it is quite likely that this ceiling was executed by the same hands that were employed upon the now demolished great gallery ceiling at BURTON AGNES, YORKS (1610) (see Figs. 198 and 199), which was of a similar character. The ceiling of one of the bedrooms at this hall is well worthy of prolonged study. It is covered all over with a

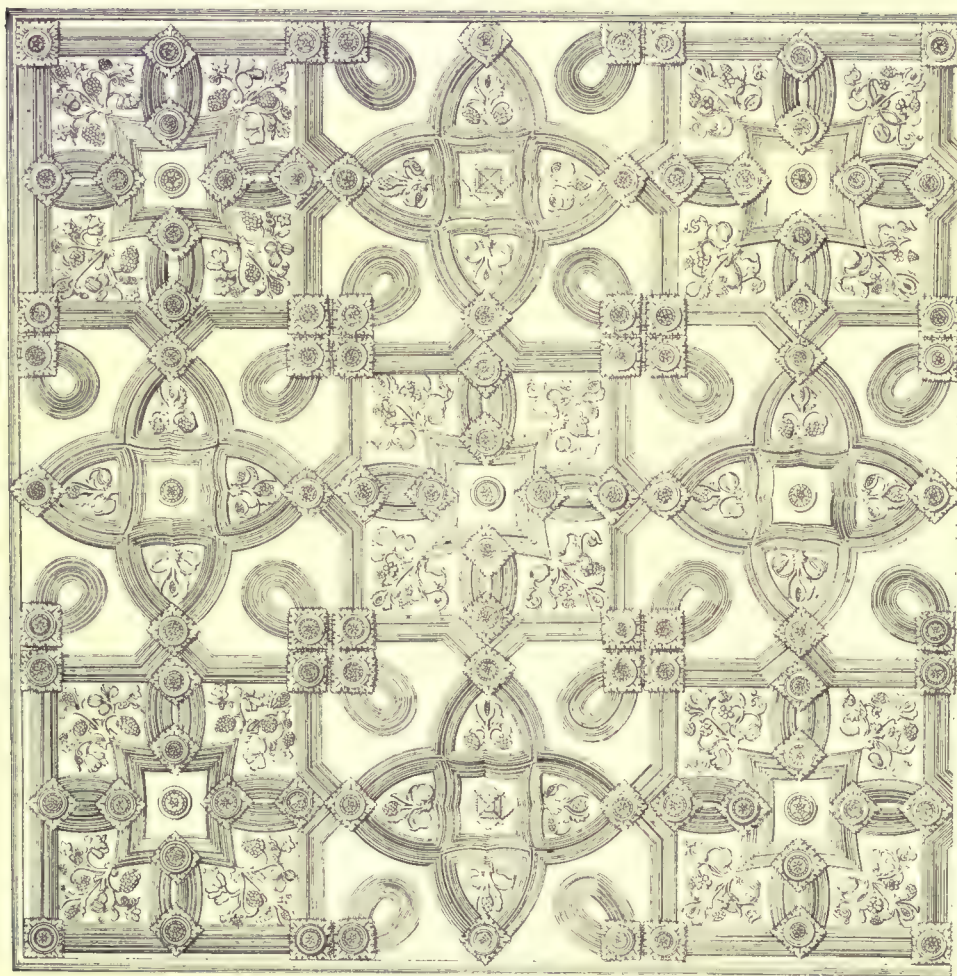




FIG. 183.—Calgarth Old Hall, Westmorland.

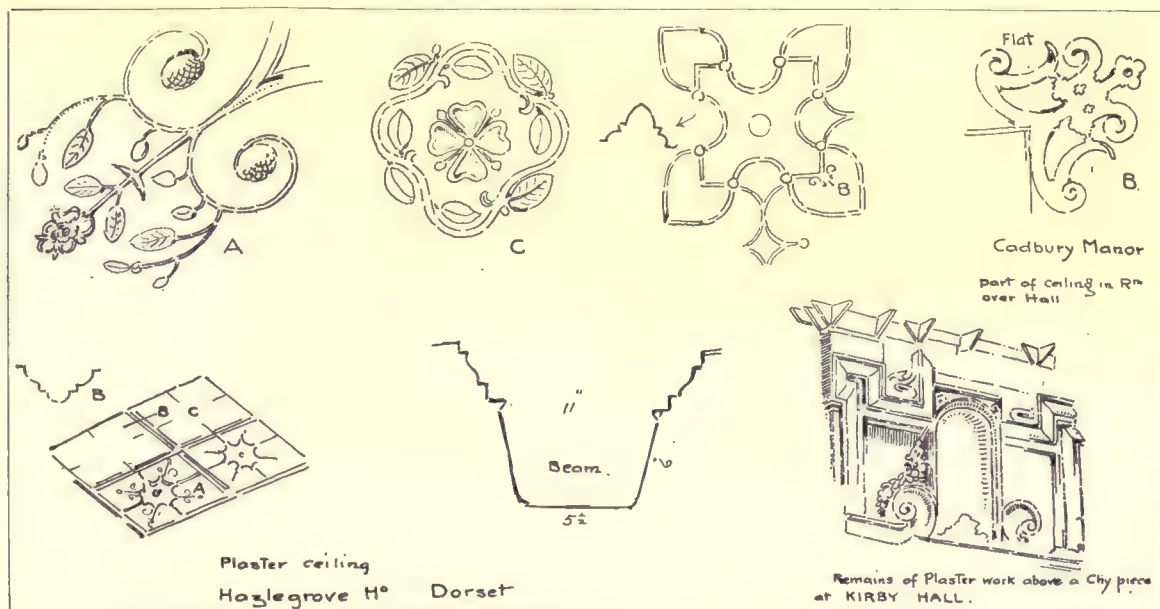


FIG. 184.—Little Strickland Hall, Westmorland.



Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch = 1 foot

FIG. 185.—Portion of a Ceiling, Drawing-room of a House in Yarmouth known as Mrs C. J. Palmer's.



FIGS. 186 and 187.—Various Plaster Details (from the Sketchbook of Mr W. Talbot Brown).



scrolled growth of honeysuckle on a large scale, and, with the vigorous modelling and high relief which the situation requires, the pleasure it gives is great. It will be noticed in Figs. 196 and 197 that where the stem crosses a leaf it loops down across it, the leaf being seen through the loop. The same idea to a lesser degree is carried out where the stems cross. It appears to have been modelled *in situ* with the fingers and small metal tools, the leaves having been pressed with a die, the flowers being cast and inserted.

Another ceiling of somewhat similar nature to the latter is given in Fig. 195.



FIG. 188.—Ceiling of a Drawing-room at Totnes, Double-rib Moulding, unenriched.

The great gallery of this house, now unfortunately in ruins, had a semicircular waggon-vaulted ceiling of exceptional beauty. Fig. 198, from a drawing by Richardson, shows something of the decoration of the single vault, which was covered all over with a vigorous scrolled growth of splendidly modelled rose pattern with leafage and reeded stemwork, of which only small fragments remain.

The setting and detail of this is shown in Fig. 199, and the splendour of it must have been great. The freedom of design, the absence of repetition, the crispness of the modelling, and the hardness of the material are sufficient evidence of the medium being stucco.

Judging from the remaining fragments, it may be safely said that it was one



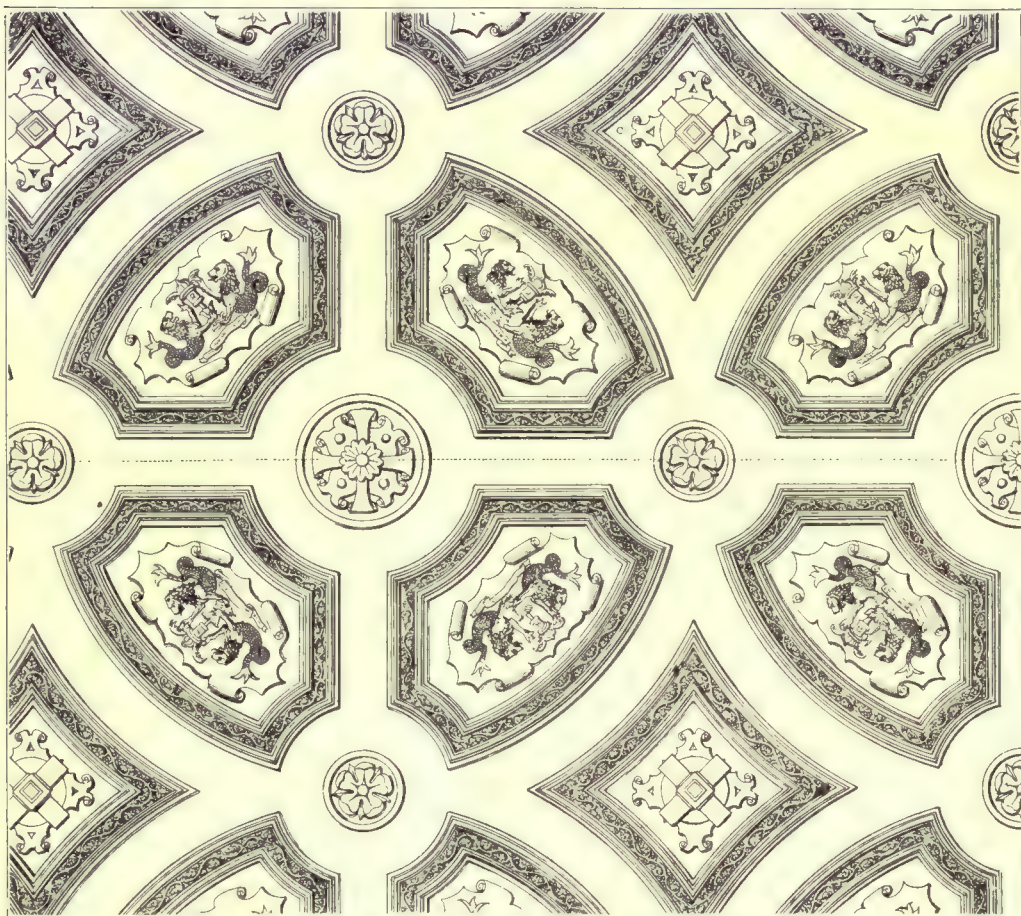


FIG. 189.—Plan of Portion of Dining-room Ceiling, Deane Hall, Northants.



FIG. 190.—Plan of Portion of Bedroom Ceiling.



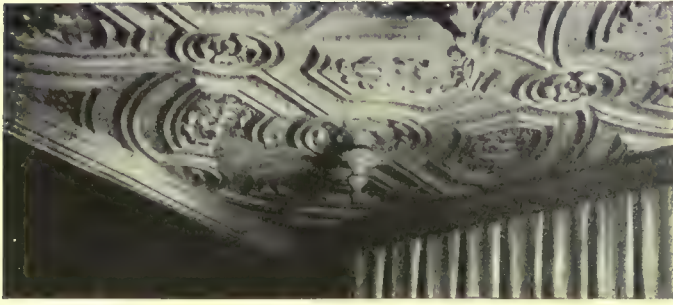


FIG. 191.—Bedroom Ceiling, Deane Hall, Northants.

and embroideries of Persia and Italy, and from the tapestries and needlework of the ladies who passed their time, when not occupied with literature, or in entertaining their husbands' visitors after the chase, by weaving the hangings for the walls of their private apartments.

This is so clearly indicated by a comparison of the two arts as to leave little room for doubt or speculation. The forms of their figures and ornaments, the growth of their floral sprays and sprigs, and the design of their running patterns in borders, are extremely similar in the spirit and style of their setting.

The panellings generally took the form of some geometric setting, which gradually developed into an arrangement radiating from centres somewhat resembling the fan tracery of Henry VII.'s time.

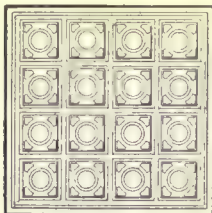


FIG. 193.—Plan of Fig. 192.

of the finest and best in the country. It is deplorable that so magnificent a piece of work should have perished; the plaster was in all probability coloured.

The plasterer, like the stone-carver of Gothic times, undoubtedly received some ideas from the patterns of the brocades



FIG. 192 —Detail of Ceiling in King James' Bedroom, Knole Park, Sevenoaks.



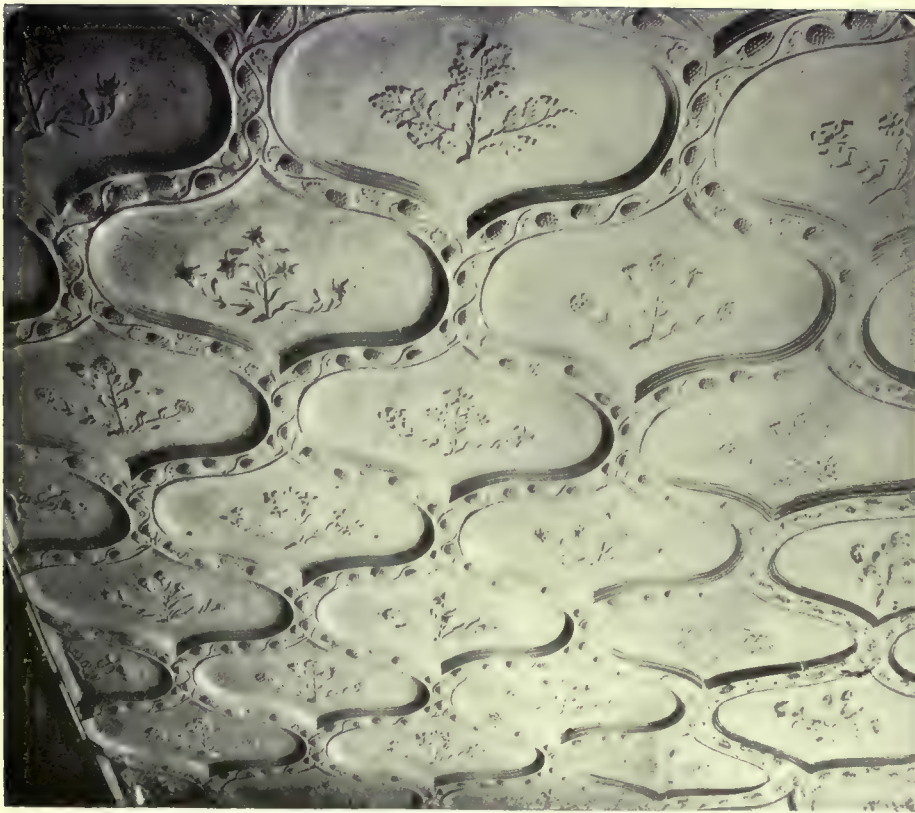


FIG. 194.—Portion of Long Gallery Ceiling, Knole Park, Sevenoaks, Kent.



FIG. 195.—Bleaze Hall, Westmorland.





FIG. 196.—Detail Plan of Portion of a Bedroom Ceiling, Burton Agnes Hall, Yorks.



FIG. 197.—Portion of a Bedroom Ceiling, Oak Room, Burton Agnes Hall, Yorks.



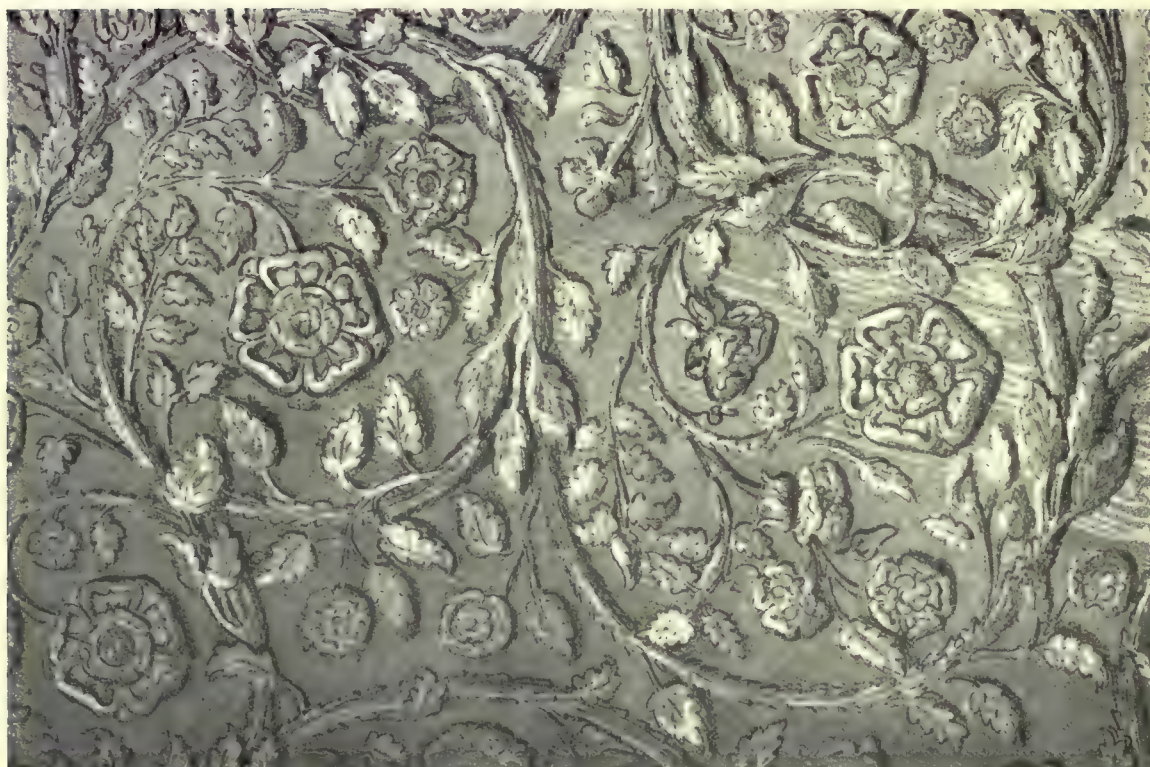


FIG. 199.—Sketch Detail of Modelling on Vaulted Ceiling,  
Burton Agnes Hall, Yorks.

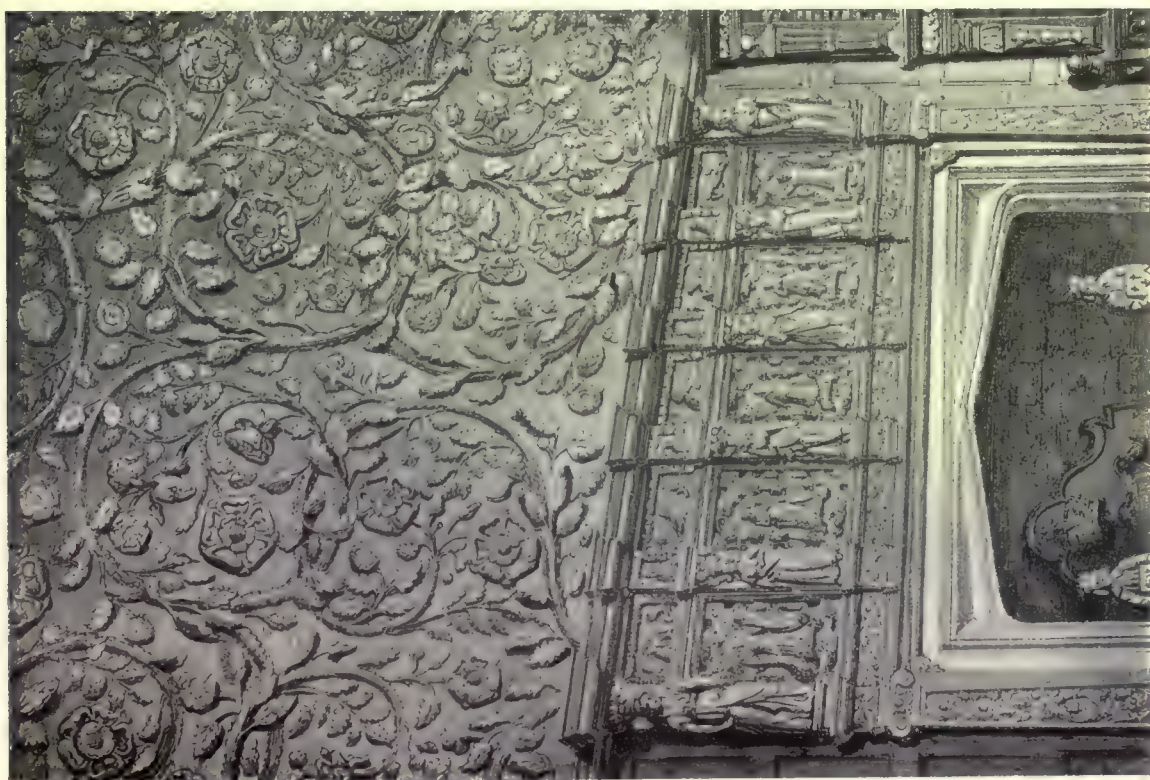


FIG. 198.—Portion of Vaulted Ceiling (now destroyed),  
Burton Agnes Hall, Yorks.



This suggestion of radiating ribs and pendentives (such as are to be seen in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster, at King's College, Cambridge, and the Cathedral at Oxford) was to some extent seized upon and gradually and generally adopted, as at Hampton Court Palace.

The radiating ribs of the ceilings were brought down into flat pendentives ending in moulded finials, such as we see in Fig. 148 previously referred to, illustrating part of a ceiling in Sizergh Hall, Westmorland, of which there is now a

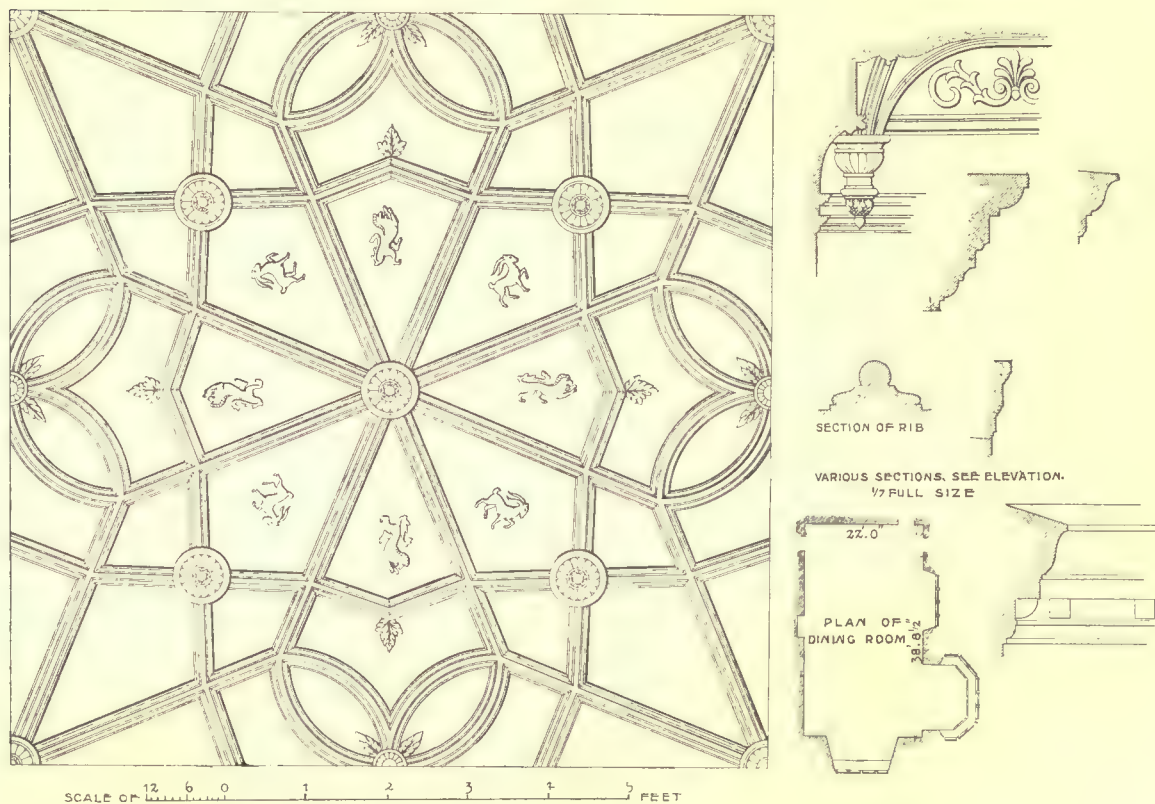


FIG. 200.—Pendentive Ceiling from the Dining-room at Gilling Castle.

reproduction in the South Kensington Museum. Also at the dining-room of Gilling Castle, Yorks (Fig. 200).

The pendentive system superseded the arrangement of ribs radiating on the flat surface of the ceilings, from which it originated.

**SOUTH WRAXALL MANOR, WILTS.**—The drawing-room, 36 ft. by 21 ft. 7 in., has a segmental vaulted ceiling with single-rib panelling of exceptional arrangement. The main pattern, formed by the ribs, is made up of large Maltese crosses, with double-looped ends that intersect. Intertwining ribs on a looped square basis form kite and heart-shaped panels throughout the ceiling, the pendentives bearing down from the centres of the crosses. All rib mitres have modelled terminals in low relief, while circular pateræ, leaves, and small bosses occupy the lesser panels (Fig. 201).

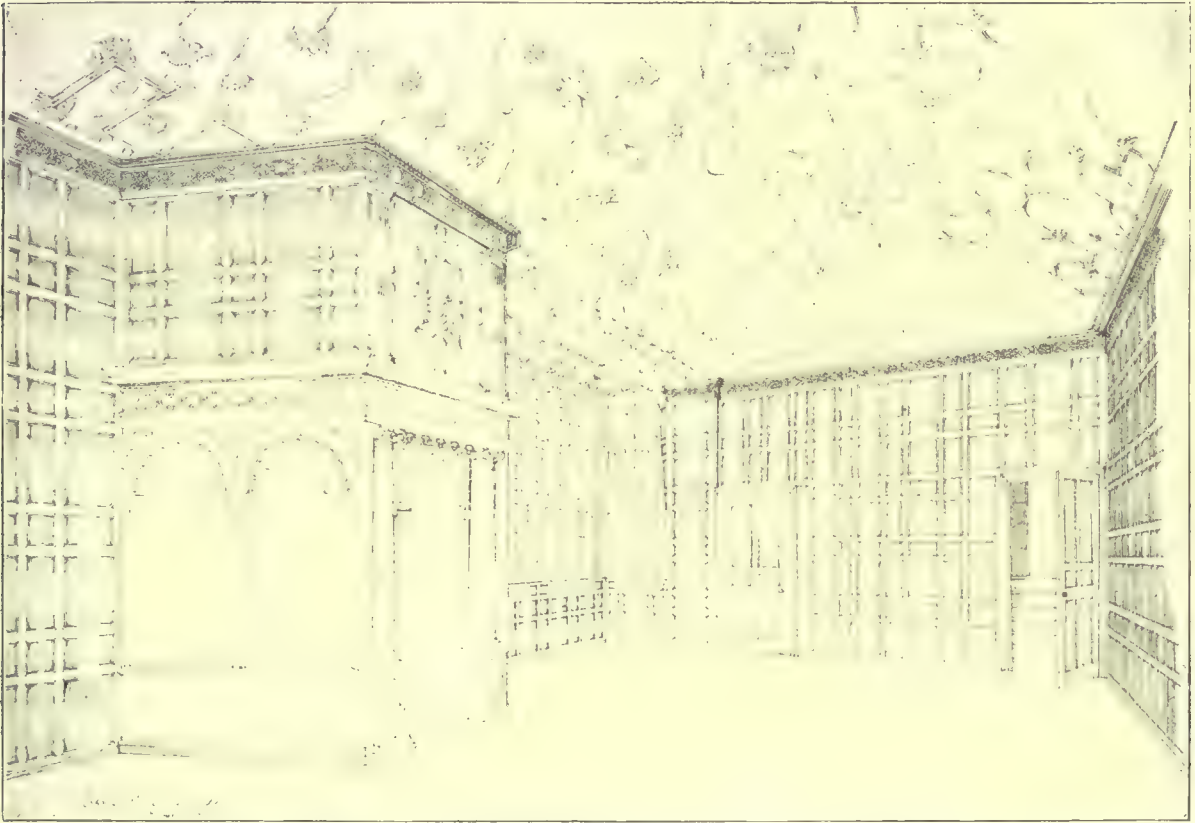


FIG. 201.—The Drawing-room South Wraxall Manor House.

*E. W. Gimson del.*

The lunettes in the lower part are treated as a frieze, with two rows of modelled low-relief shields and cartouche strap-work. The upper part contains alternative flaming suns with modelled bossed faces and terminal ornaments from the rib mitres. The bay window ceilings are flat across from the vault springs, but with ribbed panels in quatrefoils with squares inside and ornaments.

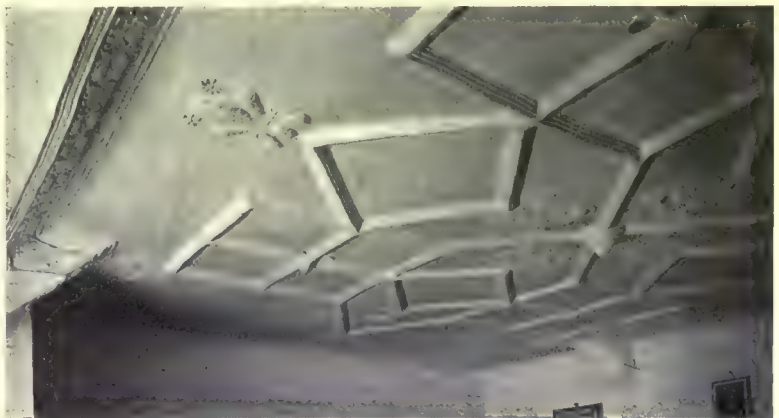


FIG. 202.—Biddacott, Chittlehampton, North Devon.

Armorial bearings, personal devices, pyramids, rosettes, monograms, and other decorations were introduced into the panel spaces formed by the moulded ribs.

At BIDDACOTT, CHITTLEHAMPTON, NORTH DEVON (Fig. 202).—In a rectangular





FIG. 203.—THE "FISH ROOM" CEILING, AUDLEY END, ESSEX.

bedroom is a charming ceiling of ribs of beaded mouldings arranged in four subdivided squares connected at the sides by lozenge-shaped ribbed panels, and angle-wise by ribs with a central boss.

An additional length is given to the plan at the ends of the room by the addition to these squares of chevron formed panels. At the angle of each square and lozenge is a simple modelled spray in rather full relief, the central panels having scrolled floral sprays in slighter relief.

A feature to be noticed at the intersection of the rib forming the outer square panels is the ingenious manner in which the central intersection of the mouldings is produced downwards to form a boss, with quaint little mouse-eared leaves in the angle of the ceiling panels.



FIG. 204.—Ceiling Pendant from Chapel, Penrose Almshouses, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple.

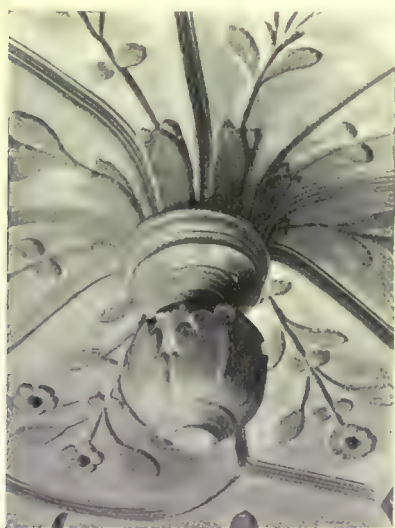


FIG. 205.—Pendant in a House in the High Street, Barnstaple, N. Devon.

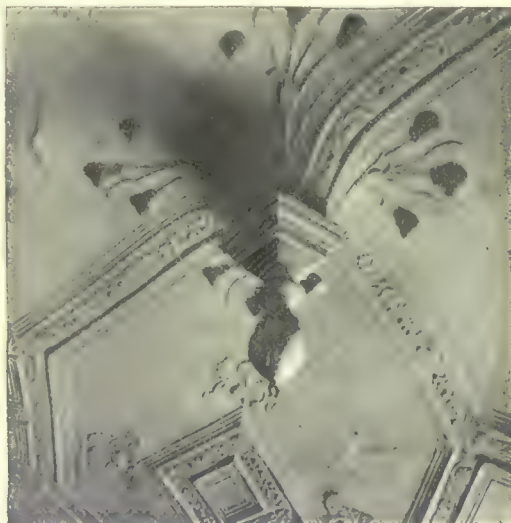


FIG. 206.—Portion of Ceiling Vault and Pendant, Southcott, Westleigh, Bideford, N. Devon.

A modelled cornice between small mouldings is taken round the room, and round the roof timbers protruding into the room through the cornice.

The basis of the earlier form of the pendentive is frequently seen on pendants when no corresponding ribs are visible on the ceiling proper.



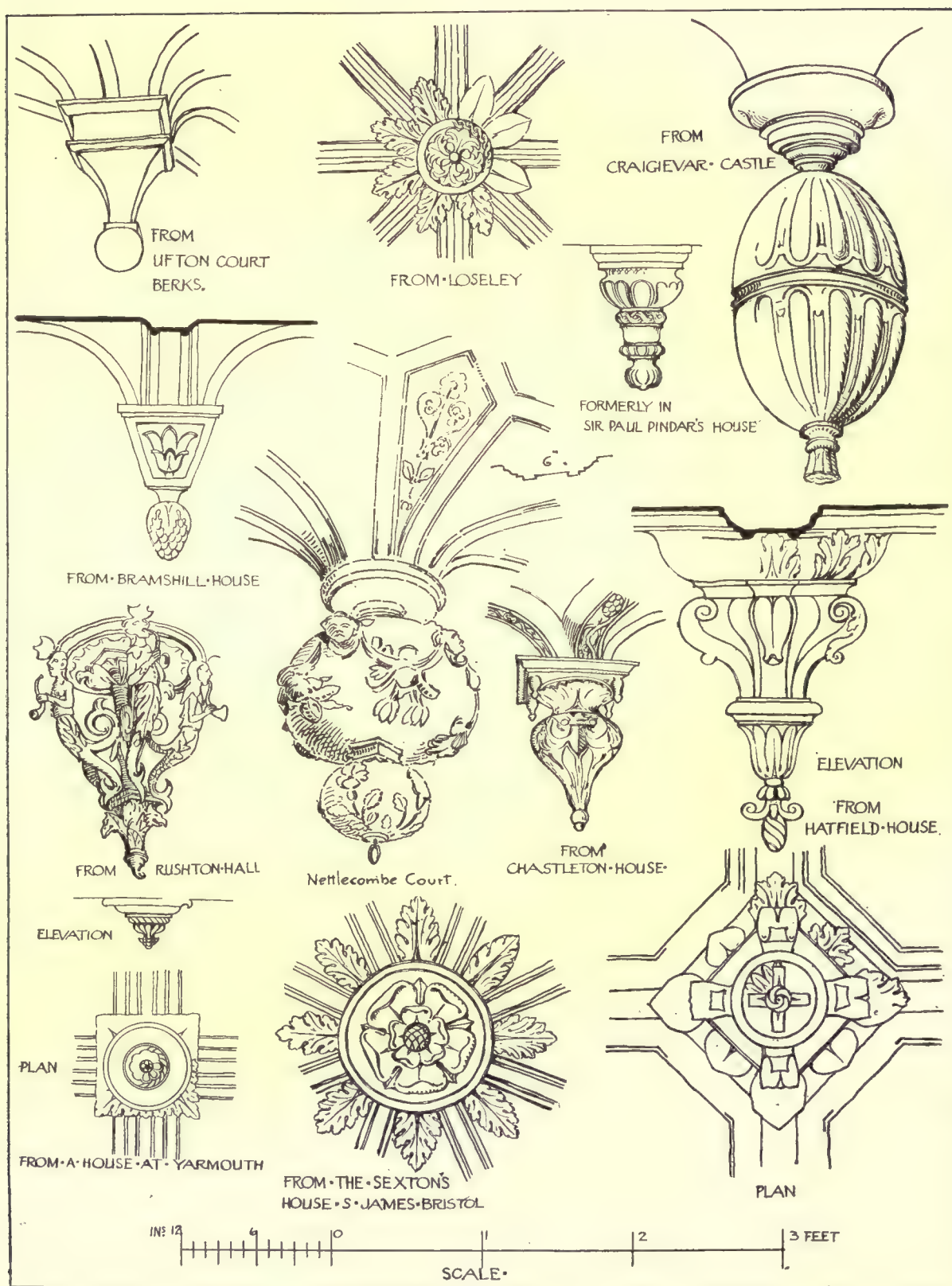


FIG. 207.—TYPES OF PENDANTS.

No better example of the "Pendentive System" can be given than the ceiling of the great room at AUDLEY END (A.D. 1615), known as the "Fish Room" from the



FIG. 208.—From Ceiling of Hall, Boston House, Brentford.

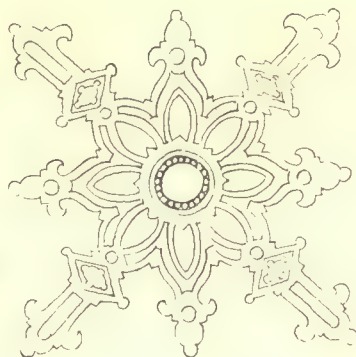


FIG. 209.—From Cromwell House, Highgate.

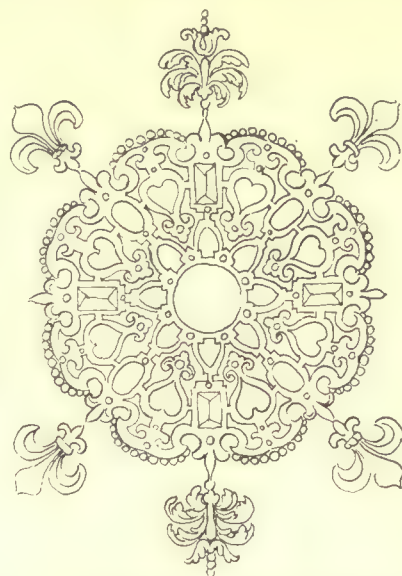


FIG. 210.—From Gallery Ceiling, Great Campden House, Kensington.

CEILING PENDANT ORNAMENTS.

introduction of aquatic forms in the square panels between the pendants (Fig. 203). Here we get the pendentive *minus* the radial ribs, and recognise in it one of the



FIG. 211.

Plan of Ceiling Ornament, Dining-room, Bishop Lloyd's House, Chester.



FIG. 212.

best ceilings of the early school of English plastering. The moulded radial ribs are replaced by a flat strap-work beautifully modelled in low relief. The date of this



ceiling is about 1615 A.D. Modelled foliage sometimes replaced the radial ribs, giving the effect of a Gothic diaper.

These ceilings of simpler treatment were to a certain extent dependent on a scheme of colouring and gilding, on which the painter worked with the plasterer,



FIG. 213.—Vaulted Ceiling with Pendant, Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire.

unless, as is more likely, the former in his own person was also the painter and gilder.

It will be noticed that the terminal and other ceiling enrichments can be seen in other illustrations of plaster taken from ceilings in Devonshire houses. An interesting pendentive ceiling centre with finial termination is shown in Fig. 204, from the

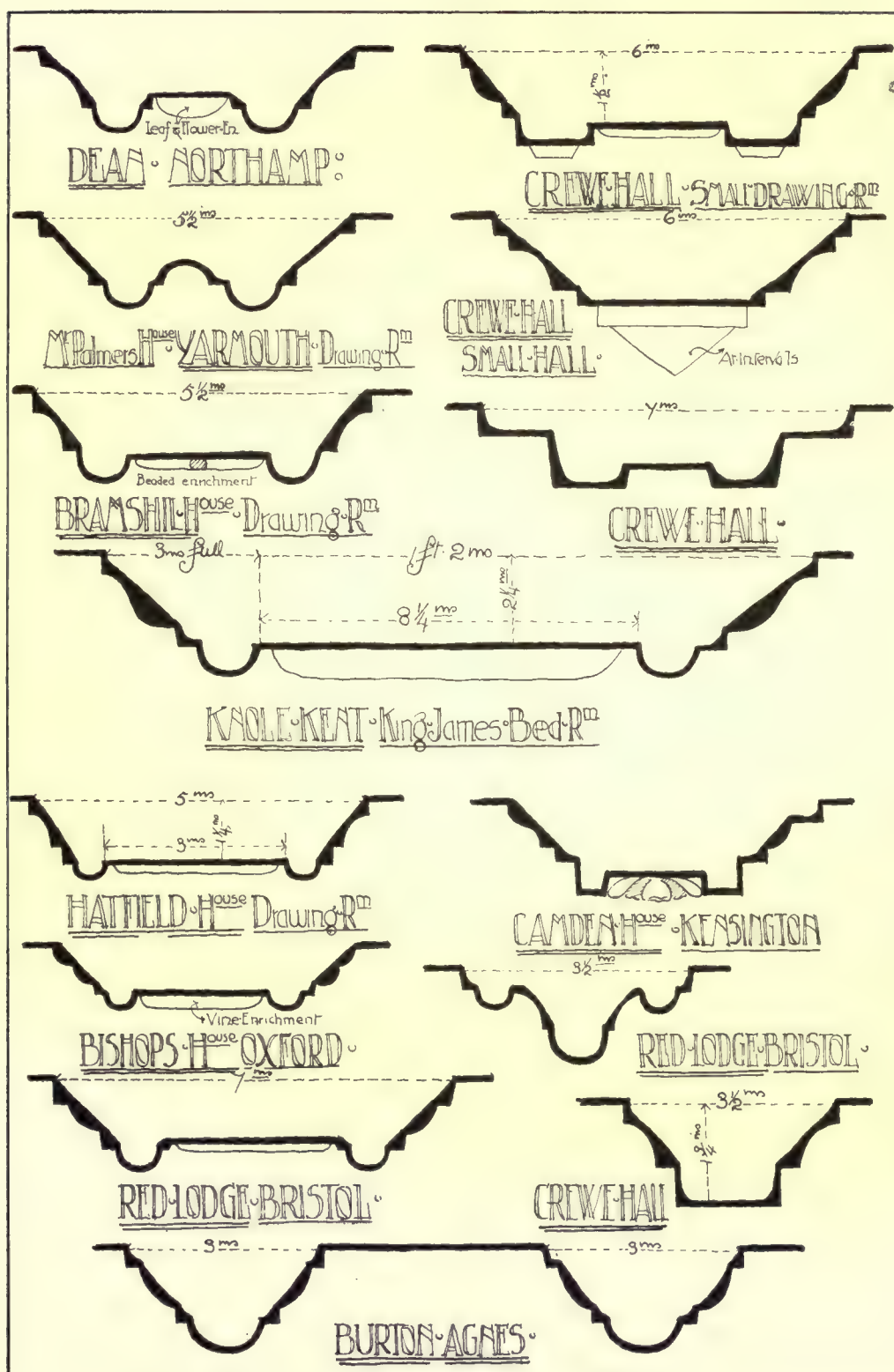


FIG. 214.—SECTIONS OF MOULDED CEILING RIBS.

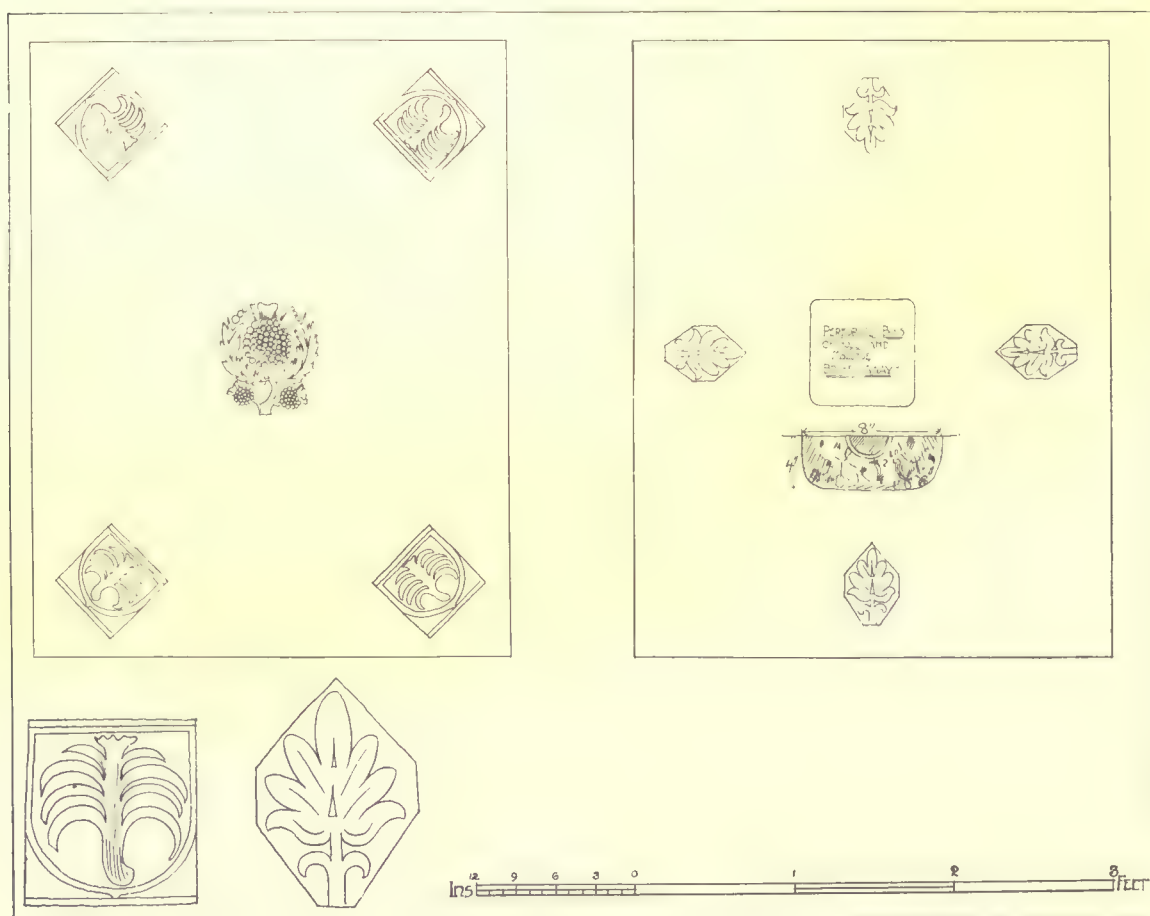


Chapel of Penrose Almshouses, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple, in which the vine with its leafage, spirals, and husked stems grows from the top of the pendant.



FIG. 215.—Detail of Ceiling Rib, Bromley by Bow Palace.

A very quaint "shaped" attic ceiling is illustrated in Fig. 205 from a house in High Street, Barnstaple, formerly occupied by Mr Kiel. Here the delicacy and refinement of the sprays, and the early form of the pendentive are again shown to advantage. Fig. 206 also shows a larger detail of a pendant finial.



FIGS. 216-219.—Plan of Two Staircase Soffits and Details, Limbury Hill, Gloucester.

Pendants of varying projection were another means of ceiling decoration. Developed from the boss, they became a feature of great interest, enhancing the general design and adding variety and richness to the ceiling proper.

The variation in size was considerable, probably originating in the boss enrichments of the panels or the little cone-shaped ornaments in combination with the surrounding leaves used to cover the intersections of the simple moulded ribs before the plasterer became an adept at working the mitres, and long afterwards. As the little excrescence increased and developed into the conical ornament, so the cone developed into the boss, the boss into the pendant, and the pendant to an elaborate shaft, in some instances with figures and leafage around, from which a lamp might be suspended.



FIG. 220.—Plan of Portion of Coffee-room Ceiling and Beam, the Feathers Hotel, Ludlow, Salop.

These shafts would generally be so placed as to emphasise an important centre, with or without pendants of lesser importance about them. The pendant would generally occur at the intersection of two ribs, or bands of enrichment (see Fig. 206). In some cases they would hang from the centres of the panels formed by the interlacing ribs or bands, as shown on accompanying Fig. 207, while in others they would be attached to the pendentive and become either a part of, or a finial to, the same.

There is an instance in a house at Yarmouth where the moulded ceiling rib is rich and broad, in which four small pendants are grouped together in a bunch at the corners of the square panels which come somewhat close together (Fig. 185).

Some will grow straight out of a plain ceiling (Figs. 204, 208-212), perhaps starting from or being defined by a moulded ring, circle, or square of modelled





FIG. 221.—PLAN OF PORTION OF A CEILING AT BROUGHTON CASTLE, OXON.

enrichment. Some will be square, some circular, placed square or angle-wise. The variety of design is as remarkable as their size is. Some will be composed of plain mouldings without enrichment of any kind.

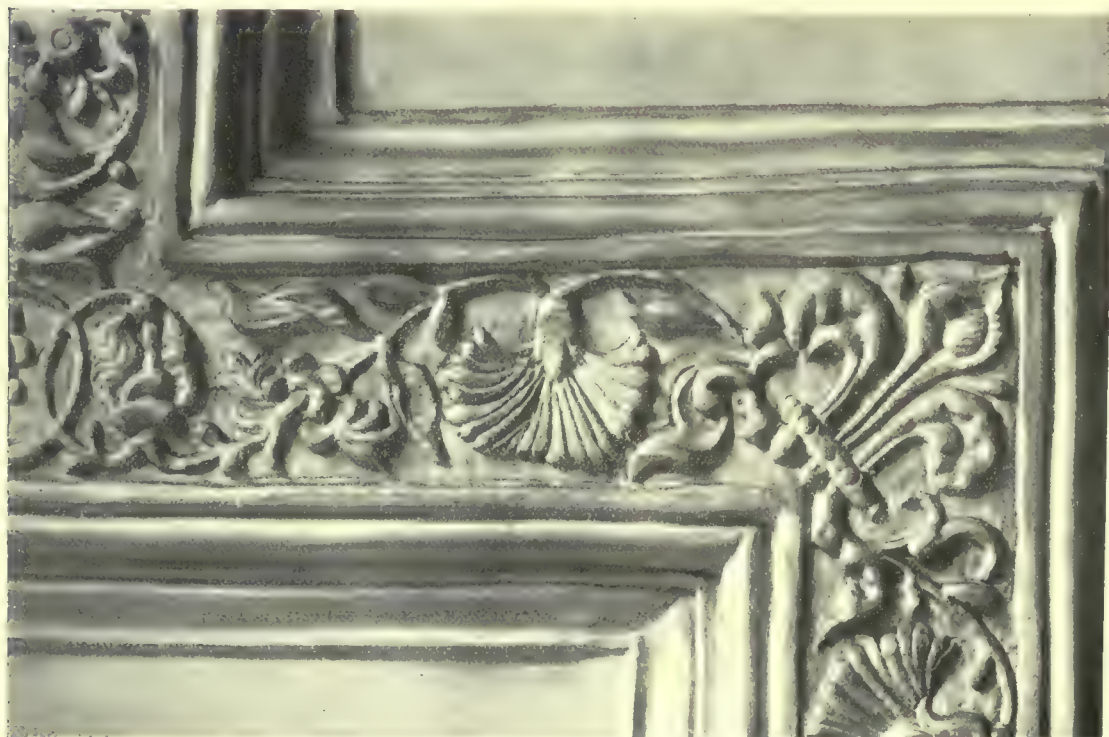


FIG. 222.—Detail of Portion of Rib Ornament, Broughton Castle, Oxon.

At CANONS ASHBY is a fine example in which four grotesques—the upper part figures, the lower part scrolled leafage—are arranged like brackets midway between

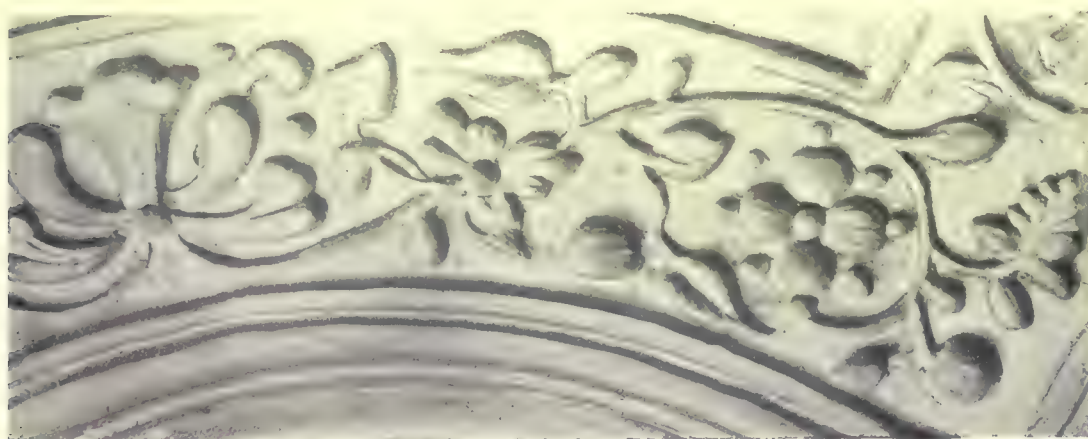


FIG. 223.—Detail of Modelled Rib, Broughton Castle, Oxon.

upper and lower tapered blocks of moulded and modelled formation terminating a pendentive (Fig. 213). At times scrolled brackets are found arranged round the



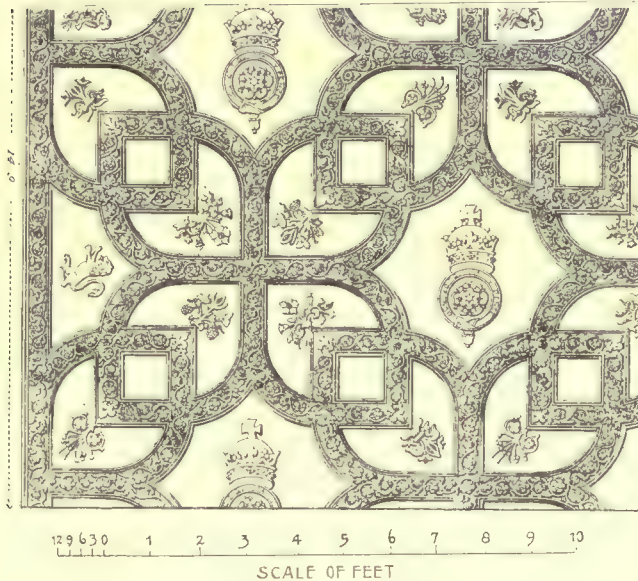


FIG. 224.—The Old Library, Bramshill House.

and flame-like forms, the spaces in between the ribs being enriched with armorial bearings, personal devices, and emblematical forms, &c., as before.

Figures were seldom introduced unless they happened to be of an armorial character.

The earlier ceilings had plainly moulded ribs after the manner of moulded groin ribs, as profiled on sheet of mouldings, Fig. 127. The ribs gradually widened, and flat or hollow spaces were introduced between mouldings forming double-moulded ribs, as in Fig. 148, and on sheet of mouldings, Fig. 214.

As the plasterer became more proficient, the widened or double ribs were more elaborately decorated. Some say that at first this enrichment was done by impression from a sort of revolving stamp or press somewhat resembling a bookbinder's tool, and the modelling by hand later, but this is a debatable matter. The edges of these flat enriched ribs had usually simple mouldings of various degrees of strength, as shown on sheet of mouldings, Fig. 214. Frequently at the intersections there were bosses modelled by hand, while at other times the

upper moulded portion, or at their extreme end, some of which will be fluted or piped, some enriched with spirited leafage clinging closely to the face of a spherical or square-shaped lump. Some will be perforated or hollowed out in a manner resembling the carvings in wood at the bases of newels in staircases (Fig. 207).

The pendentive system was in its turn superseded by the geometric arrangement of ribs, which differed from the earlier arrangement in its not being limited to straight lines. The ceiling spaces abounded with interlacing lozenges, quatrefoils, circles, ovals, and other



FIG. 225.—Portion of Beam and Ceiling Rib and Pendant Boss, Bishop's House, Oxford.



FIG. 226.—CEILING FROM THE OLD PALACE, BROMLEY BY BOW (Transferred to Victoria and Albert Museum).



pattern would be continued across and mitred as the plasterer's fancy directed him, as instanced in Figs. 194 and 215.

In Queen Elizabeth's time the ceilings chiefly consisted of double-moulded ribs with running enrichments between, with sprigs or sprays of flowers, medallions, and

plaques, or panels of floral ornament enriching the panel spaces so formed (Fig. 194).

At this period the ribs forming the main pattern were more frequently cast in plaster of Paris from reverse moulds of plaster, or run *in situ* with reverse templates. The sprays and medallions in early days were nearly always modelled by hand. Later, they were stamped, and later still they were cast in plaster of Paris, even when the other parts of the ceiling were worked in position. Sometimes in early work the patterns were "butter pressed" or stamped in a manner which puts one in mind of the way of turning out butter pats which is traditional among farmers' wives and their dairymaids. The background of these squeezes is generally slightly recessed beyond the main surface of the ceilings,

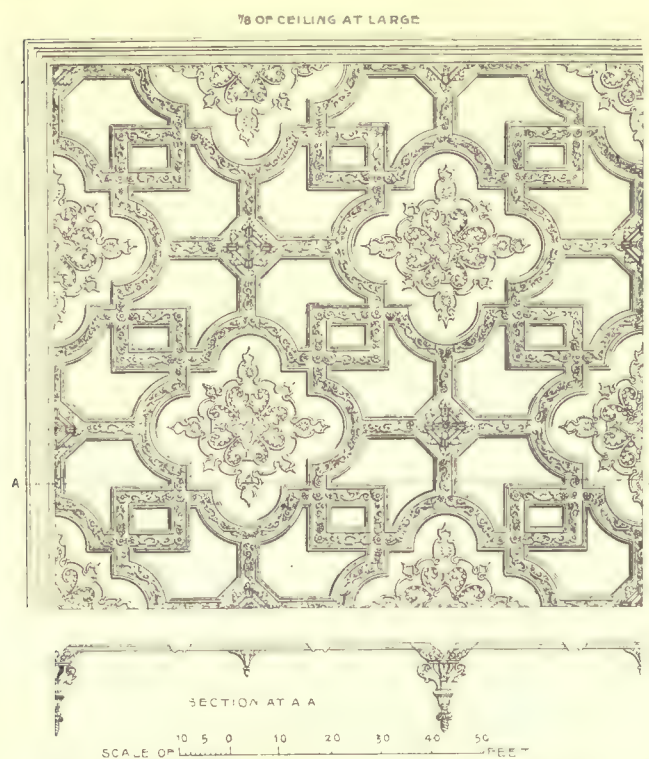


FIG. 227.—Drawing-room Ceiling at Hatfield House.

FIG. 228.—Section of this Ceiling.

framing the ornamentation in all manner of quaint irregular forms, sometimes placed square-wise, sometimes angle-wise. In some cases there are lozenges, diamonds, and other shapes variously placed, charmingly unexpected and delightful in their primitive simplicity and freshness.

Examples of this kind of work are known to the writer, applied underneath the landings and raking surfaces of staircases in old farm-houses and humble dwellings in the Midland counties, where sprigs of tulip, thistle, and lily occupy the tiny "butter presses," and in the centre of each landing in one instance between the "presses" there is or has been a perforated "cast boss" of intertwined holly and mistletoe (Figs. 216-219).

The stamping of early Elizabethan ceilings may have been done in the following manner:—

The enrichment modelled in plaster or clay, a mould being cast from the same

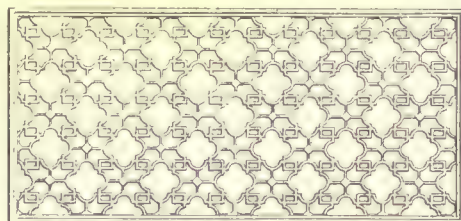
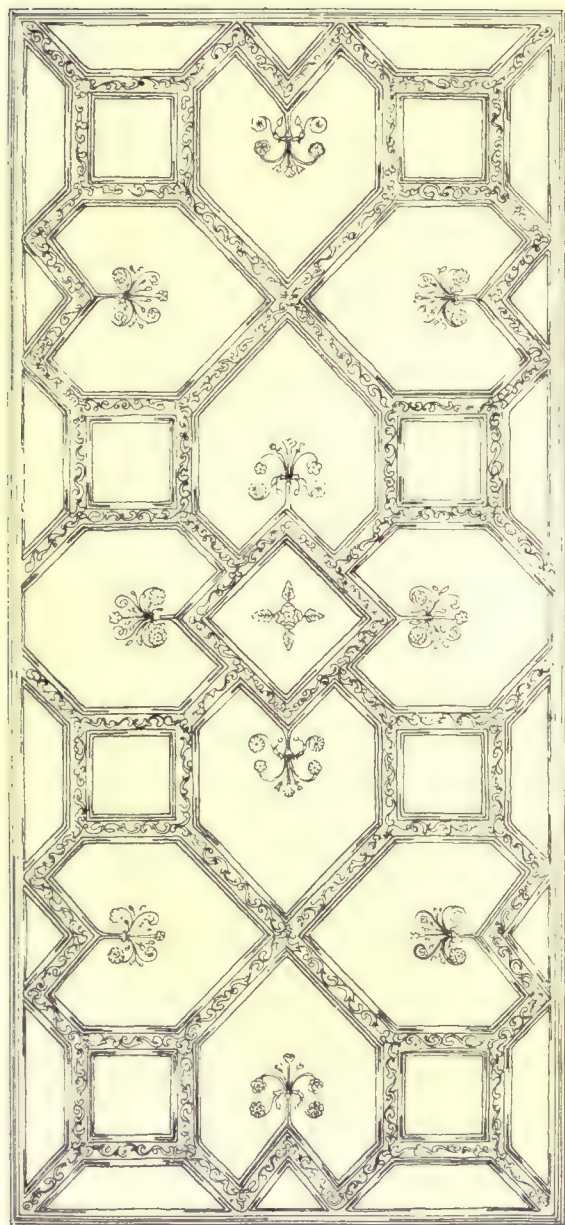
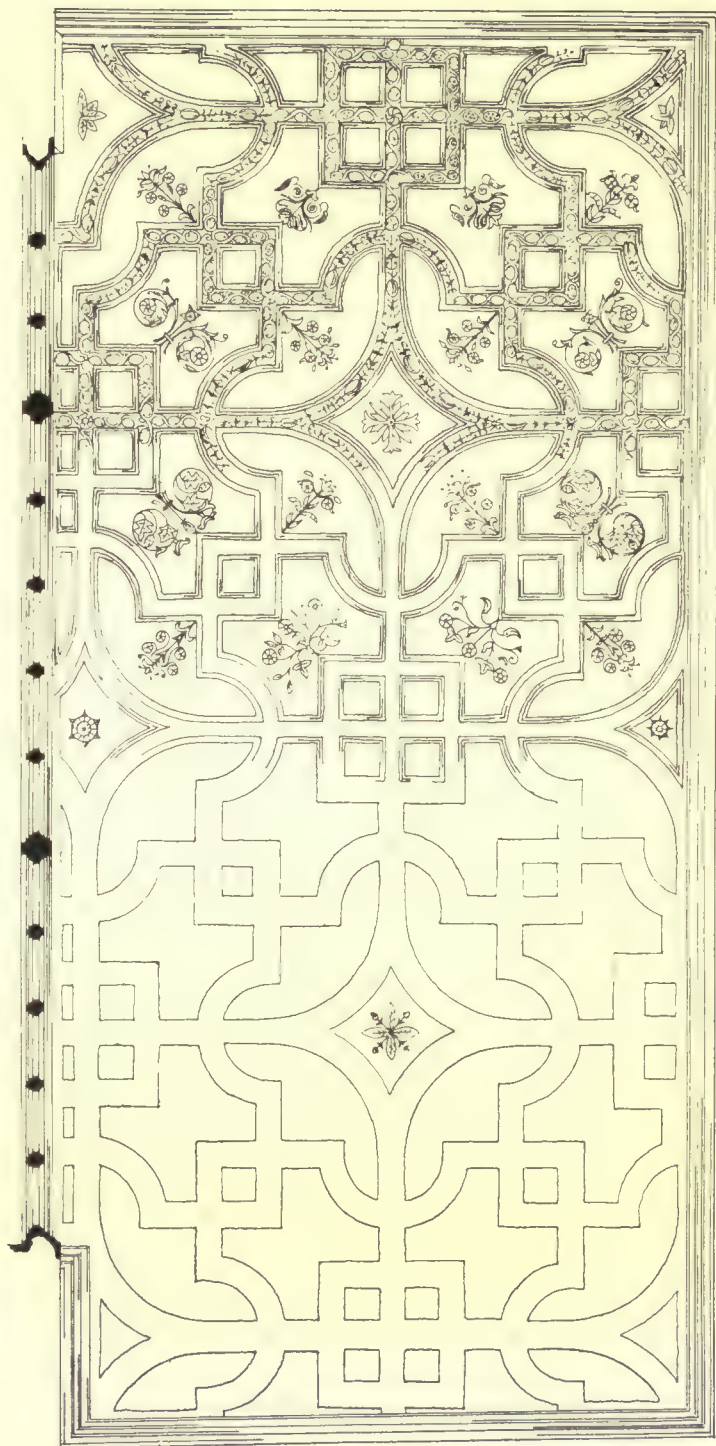


FIG. 229.—Plan of Drawing-room Ceiling, Hatfield House.



1<sup>re</sup> 12 0 1 2 3 4 5 P<sup>re</sup>

FIG. 230.—No. 80 FORE STREET, EXETER.



1<sup>re</sup> 12 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 P<sup>re</sup>

FIG. 231.—No. 171 FORE STREET, EXETER.



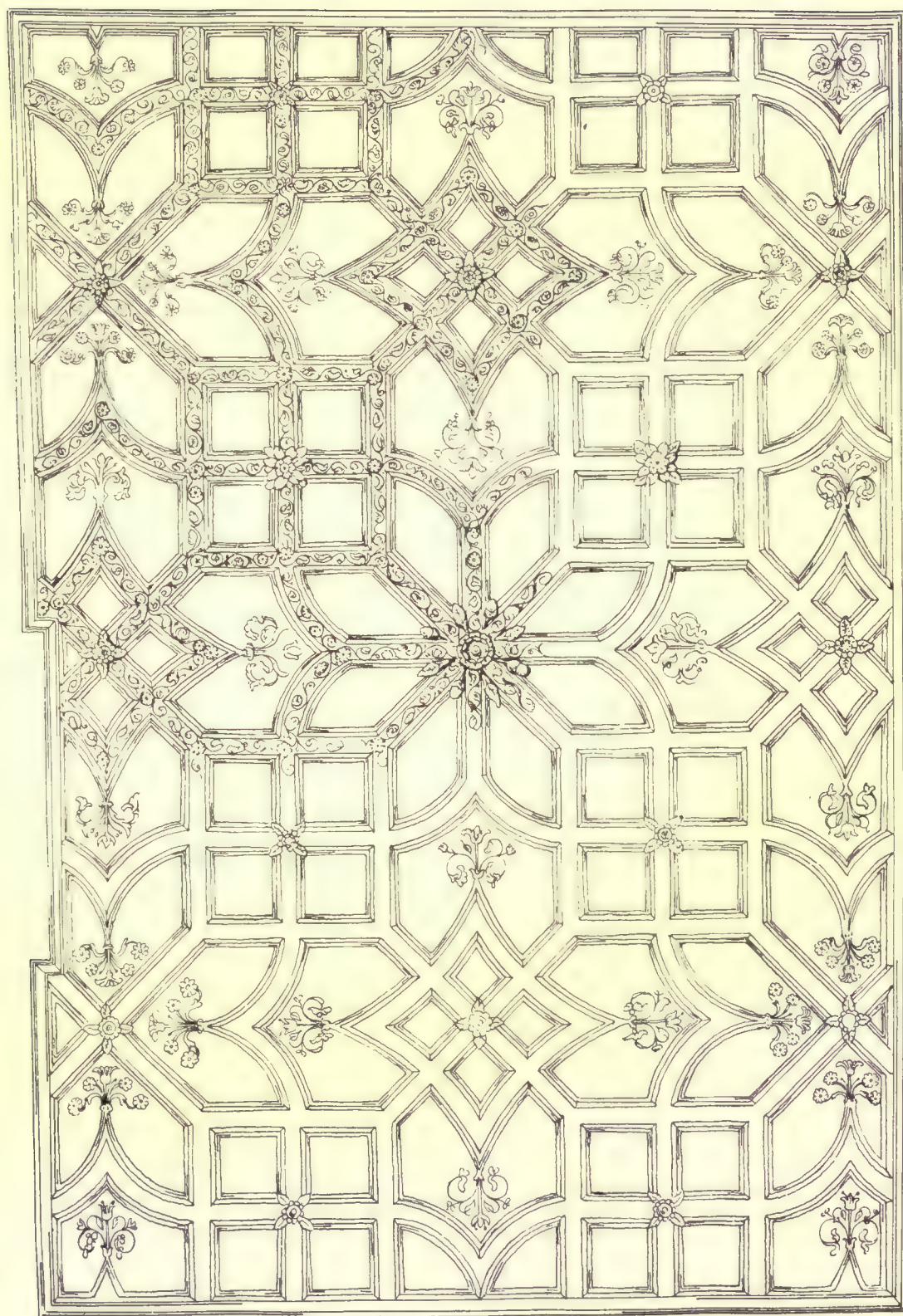


FIG. 232.—PLAN OF CEILING, BAMPFYLDE HOUSE, EXETER.

in plaster. This mould would be soaped, varnished, or coated with some preparation to stop the suction of the plaster. A semi-liquid plaster would then be poured in,

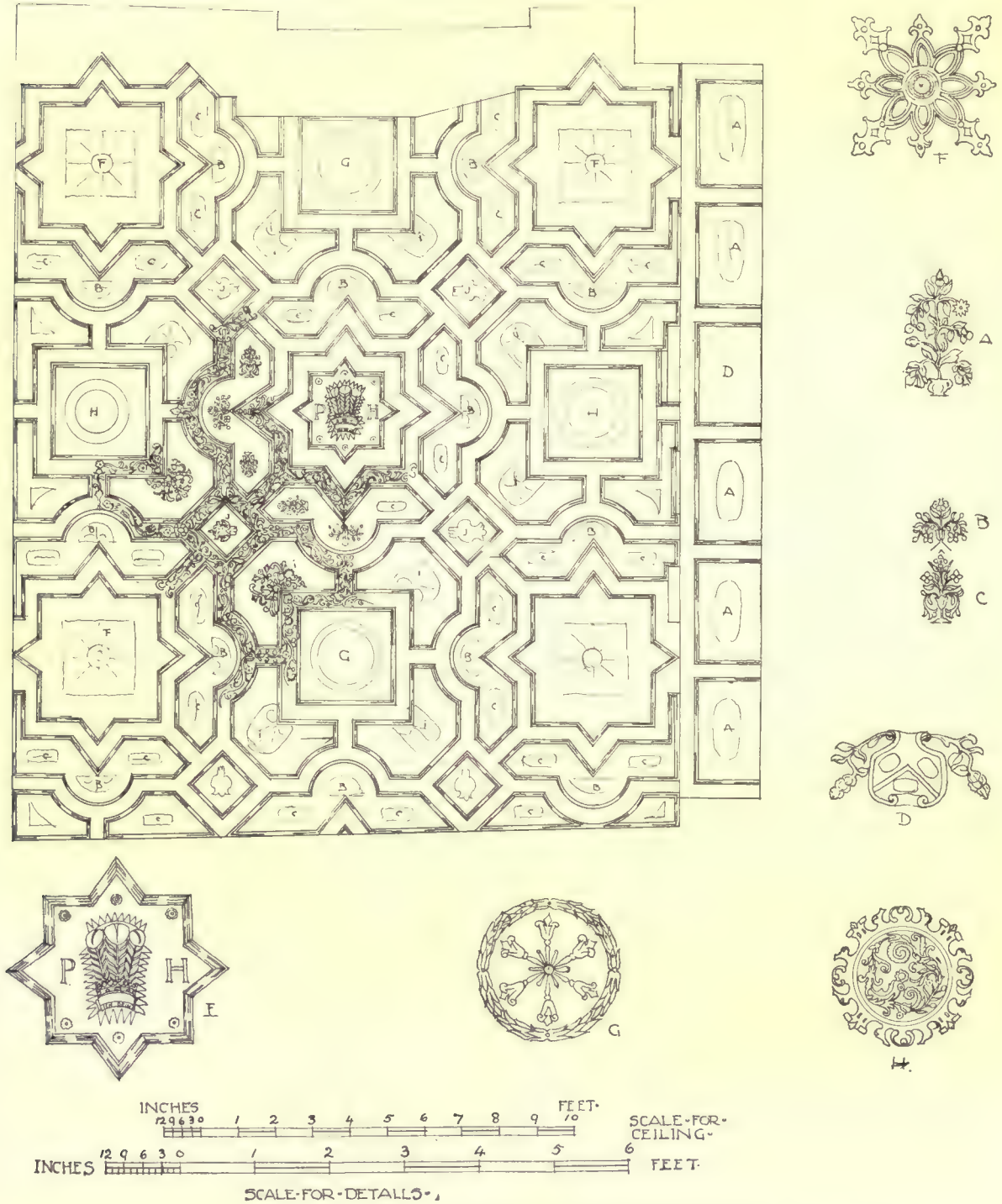


FIG. 233.—First Floor Room, No. 17 Fleet Street, London.

*W. H. Aspell del.*

and the mould immediately applied to the ceiling and held there by a stay from the scaffolding until sufficiently set to allow of its removal, the enrichment being after-



wards cleaned and touched up where needed with a small metal tool by hand. In later years the method was confined almost exclusively to casting in plaster of Paris (sulphate of lime) from moulds. The work was more quickly done in this way. It was often quite beautiful, and also was less expensive, but, as a means of attaining the end, it cannot be recommended so unreservedly as the modelling of decoration *in situ*, or even as stamping the plaster with dies.

One advantage was perhaps gained by casting; it was productive of a great softness of texture combined with a certain dulness, which may be regarded as the distinctive quality of a soft material, such as plaster of Paris. On the other hand, there was the loss of intellectual effort on the part of the executant, increasing as it did the amount of mechanical labour, and limiting the chance of freedom of thought and action which the modeller has in the direct method. During Elizabeth's prosperous

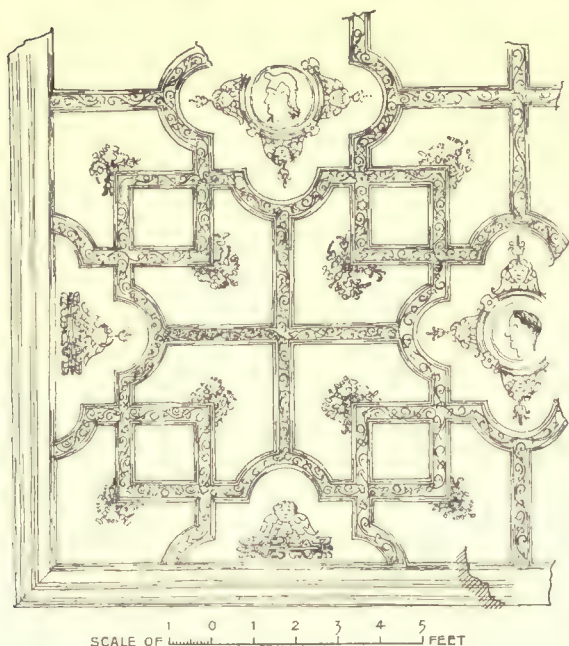


FIG. 234.—Ceiling of Library at Mapledurham House (one-eighth only drawn).

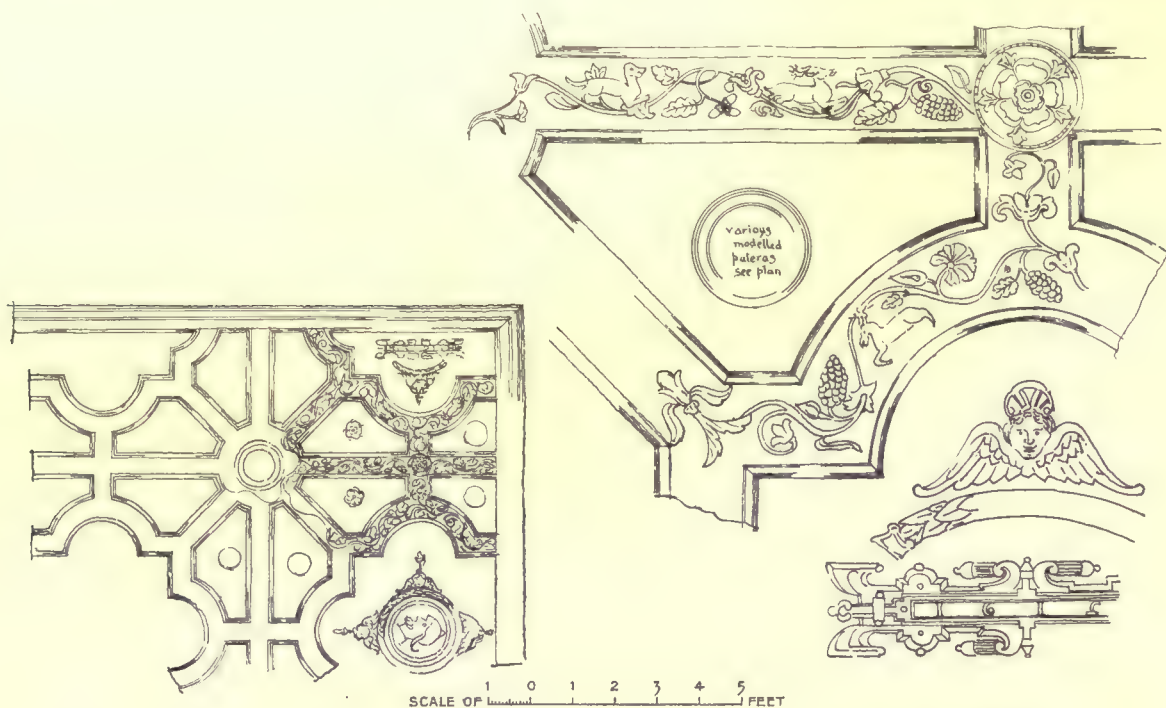


FIG. 235.—Ceiling of Oak Room in North Wing, Mapledurham House.

FIGS. 236-8.—Details of Ceiling.

reign houses like those above mentioned and others were built in all parts of the country, and the impetus given to the art of building by the frequent visits of the queen to her favoured courtiers caused them to vie with each other in the erection of the finest houses, with the loftiest and most spacious entrance halls, galleries, or withdrawing rooms, the most imposing staircases, the largest and grandest chimney pieces, and the richest plaster ceilings and friezes.

This fashion spread to the lesser houses of the gentry, to the tenements of the "middle classes," and even to the homes of the yeomen. The mason, the joiner,



FIG. 239.—View of Library Ceiling, Audley End, Essex.

and the smith each had their opportunity, and the plasterer was not slow to take advantage of the craze of the day for ornament.

The fashion continued right through the reigns of James and Charles, and not until the troubled days of the Commonwealth did the art of the "playsterer" show any signs of deteriorating, although there were changes of style corresponding to similar changes in the costumes of the day and in the habits of people in general.

The widened enriched ribs with or without modelled panel enrichments of plaques, sprigs, sprays, modelled panels, crests, and heraldic forms are shown in the following examples from the Feathers Inn, Ludlow (Fig. 220); Broughton Castle (Figs. 221-223); Knole, Kent (Fig. 194); Library, Bramshill House, Hants (Fig. 224); Bishop's House, Oxford (Fig. 225); Bromley by Bow, London (Fig. 226);



Hatfield House (Figs. 227-229); two ceilings, Fore Street, Exeter (Figs. 230, 231); Bampfylde House, Exeter (Fig. 232); No. 17 Fleet Street, London (Fig. 233); two ceilings from Mapledurham, Oxon. (Figs. 234-238); and in numerous Scottish houses described in Chapter VIII. (Figs. 292-309, &c.).

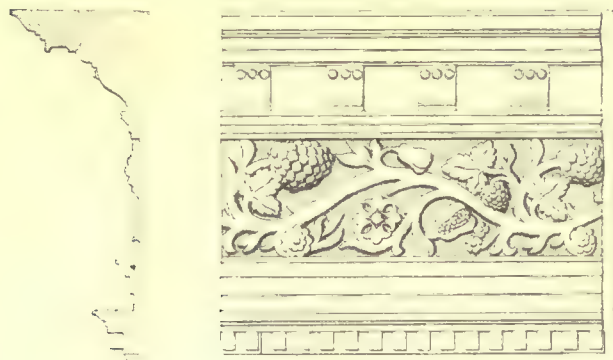


FIG. 240.—Frieze in Drawing-room, Bramshill House.

design was reversed or doubled over on to the other side of the room, forming the half ceiling, and this half-ceiling design was doubled over again, completing the whole.

AUDLEY END, again, furnishes an excellent example of this arrangement, dating A.D. 1615 (Fig. 239). The system, once adopted, superseded the geometric arrangement, in place of which there are various contorted and sometimes complicated arrangements of strap-work full of clever playfulness, intricate form, and fresh development of ideas covering the ceiling area.

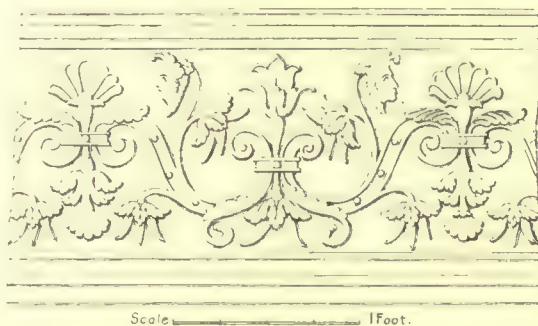


FIG. 241.—Frieze in Library, Bramshill House.

### THE FRIEZE.

The plasterer had in the frieze a more favourable opportunity for the display of his genius than there is or could be in the ceiling, which, with its concavities and subdivisions, occupies in the artist's eye a relatively disadvantageous position. Consequently there was no stinting of art designed for this place, and not only was an infinity of pains bestowed on its modelling, but its effect was enhanced by the addition of colour and gilding.

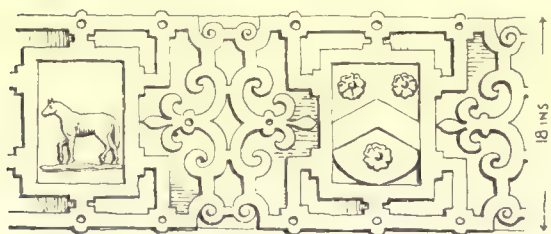


FIG. 242.—A Frieze from Montacute House.

Like the chimney ornaments, the modelled frieze is to be found in the cottage as well as the mansion.

In early days the stuccoist modelled his frieze *in situ*, and frequently painted it in tempera colouring, as at Hardwick Hall (see frontispiece, Fig. 1, and Figs. 63-66). Later on, the parge-worker continued more modestly the decoration of this prominent portion of the room.]

At the junction of the ceiling and the wall a series of mouldings of plaster or wood forming a cornice would crown the panelling, or a band of mouldings on the ceiling would connect the ceiling with the walls.

Beneath this cornice or group of ceiling mouldings there were frequently modelled ornaments in the style of the age which gave us the "swag" and other such triumphs of art, which, if described in detail, would require more space than can be spared.

The frieze of that date, corresponding in point of time with the single-moulded ceiling rib, was generally modelled with a free treatment of scrolled stem and leaf design, sometimes with fruit or flowers, heraldic birds or animals growing from a central stem, root, or dividing line.

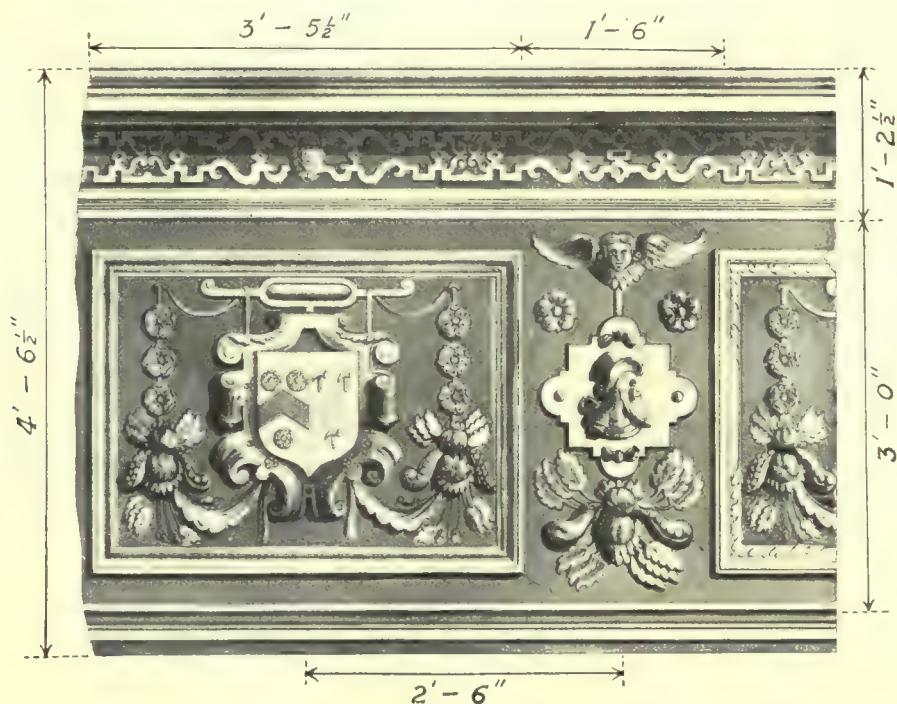


FIG. 243.—Frieze from Great Chamber, Montacute House, Somerset.

At MAPLEDURHAM, OXFORDSHIRE, a bedroom frieze, 1 ft. 2½ in. deep, has a wreath containing a rose supported by winged dragons and a cockle-shell crest, repeating at intervals, with a square-shaped spray of tulips, roses, and leaves growing from a pot with handles. A simply moulded cornice, 5 in. deep, crowns the top, and a moulded architrave below.

Another interesting example, 1 ft. 2 in. deep, of frieze is from the same house. Scrolled swags of flatly modelled acanthus leafage terminating in winged sea-horses are looped up at intervals by mermaids with long tresses and scaly tails, terminating in leafage, fruit, and the birds that feast on it, and mouldings above and below.

A favourite treatment was the modelling of fruit, flowers, and leafage in various free settings, growing from a running stem, as in the drawing-room at Bramshill House, Hants, date 1603 (Fig. 240).



The plaster frieze in the library of the same house has an arabesque pattern, 19 in. deep, of honeysuckle, columbine, and tulip, with scrolled brackets and masks, as shown in Fig. 241.

The design is suggestive of Florentine work, and shows great excellence of taste and technique.

At HELMSLEY CASTLE is a simple narrow frieze with shields placed at intervals connected by heraldic figures.

At MONTACUTE is an interesting frieze of armorial shields at short intervals,



FIG. 244.—Drawing-room Frieze, Haddon Hall.

connected by strap-work and fleur-de-lis terminals (Fig. 242). Another frieze from the great chamber of the same house is shown in Fig. 243.

Strap-work friezes with oval cartouche panels containing figure subjects were common in James I.'s time, as at Crewe Hall and elsewhere. The hunting and sporting tendency of the time was very frequently portrayed, as at St Michael's Mount, Cornwall (illustrated in Chapter V., Fig. 69).

Illustrations of stag hunts, boar hunts, falconry, and other pastimes, with detail according to fancy, are constantly to be found in libraries and withdrawing rooms.

At HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE, the drawing-room has a frieze of almost unique interest. This is made up of five strips of enrichment with mouldings between, a

cornice at top, and a cove at the bottom base of same immediately over the wood panelling. The enrichment has probably been cast from models used elsewhere, and stuck in between the longitudinal bands of rudely run mouldings (Fig. 244).

The ceiling, excepting in the bay window near fireplace, is quite plain, much enhancing the enrichment of the frieze. The date, 1545, is shown on the chimney piece of this room.

The frieze in the Wynne Room, Plas Mawr (Fig. 164), is another interesting example of wall treatment that well might be copied by the designers of present-day houses. Divided up into squares, the full depth from ceiling to dado, each has a lesser square panel in its centre, this containing heraldic animals. The lesser squares are connected with each other, and with ceiling and dado mould by short ribs of the same section, while fleurs-de-lis radiate from the angles, and rosettes occupy the lesser panels.

Drawing-room frieze, date 1580 (Fig. 168). Caryatids between

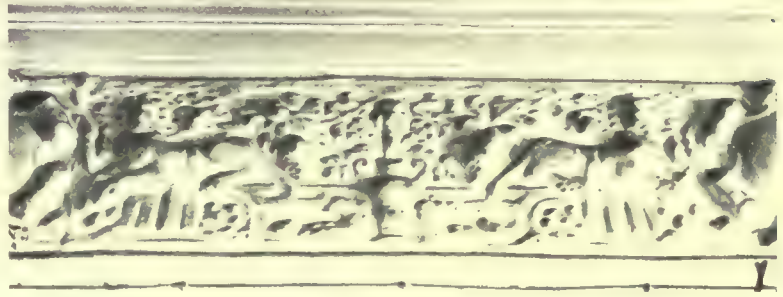


FIG. 245.—Assize Courts Hotel, Bristol.



FIG. 246.—Assize Courts Hotel, Bristol.



FIG. 247.—Landkey Mill, Barnstaple, North Devon.

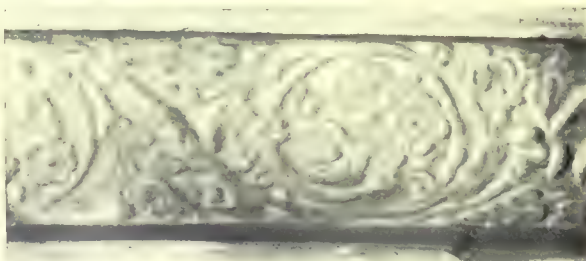


FIG. 248.  
Frieze, Manor  
House, West  
Down, North  
Devon.

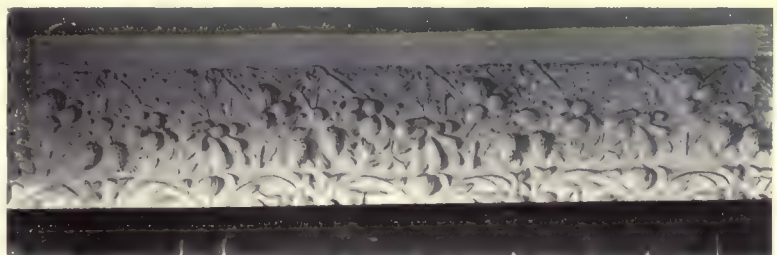


FIG. 249.—Portion of Frieze from Hall Place, West Burton, Sussex.





FIG. 250.—St Peter's Hospital, Bristol.



FIG. 251.—Portion of Frieze, Sizergh Hall, Westmorland.



FIGS. 252 and 253.—Portions of Frieze, 11 in. wide, Bromley by Bow Palace.



FIG. 254.—From Gallery Ceiling, Charlton House.

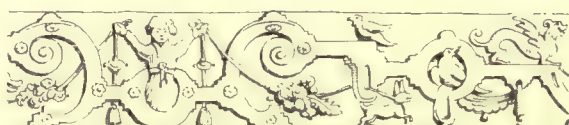


FIG. 254A.—From Audley End.

cornice and panelling, disposed at intervals forming rectangular panels, with small masks in between.

The chimney overmantel (Fig. 167) has a caryatid on either side; the garter occupies the centre with E and R on left and right.

Some typical specimens of ELIZABETHAN PLASTER FRIEZES are shown in Figs. 245-253. Two examples are given in Figs. 245, and 246 from ASSIZE COURTS HOTEL, BRISTOL, of quite a different treatment from others in the same building. In Fig. 245 we have the cartouche shields at intervals, with lumpy animals, probably bearers, on either side,



FIGS. 255 and 256.—Detail of Rosettes, Chastleton Manor, Oxon.

the space in between being filled with floral ornaments growing from a pot.

In Fig. 246 we again get the shield application at intervals, the space between being filled in with free scrolls terminating in simple rosettes and spiral flowers.



FIG. 257.



FIG. 258.

Examples of Treatment of Heraldic Modelling, Sizergh Hall, Westmorland.





FIG. 259.



FIG. 260.



FIG. 261.



FIG. 262.

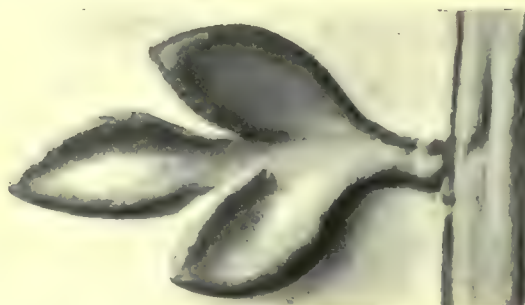


FIG. 263.



FIG. 264.

TYPES OF MODELLED SPRIGS FROM BAY WINDOW, SIZERCH HALL, WESTMORLAND.



FIG. 265.—Detail of a Ceiling Panel, Sir Paul Pindar's House, Bishopsgate.



FIG. 266.—Detail of a Panel from Ceiling, Sir Paul Pindar's House.



Fig. 247 shows a very neat and interesting example, from LANDKEY MILL, BARNSTAPLE, NORTH DEVON, dated 1659, in which the date and the initials of the



FIG. 267.—Part of Coved Ceiling, Beckington Abbey, Somerset.

owner come between rectangular patches of floral design, growing or scrolling from the central stem in symmetrical setting.

Fig. 248, from the MANOR HOUSE, WEST DOWN, NORTH DEVON, illustrates another type of frieze very common at this period. This should be compared with other plasterwork from the same house, illustrated in Fig. 111 p. 78. It is, however, so much obscured by whitening that much of the detail is lost.

At HALL PLACE, WEST BURTON, SUSSEX, is an extremely interesting frieze illustrated in Fig. 249. Originally it was evidently in two depths, as will be seen from the figure, the upper portion being

formed of fruit and leafage, in bunches of well-defined relief, hanging, in the form of drops and swags, from ribbons and rings, whilst the background is filled in with straggling leaf, berry and stem, in much lower relief, and on a small scale.

Fig. 250 from ST PETER'S HOSPITAL, BRISTOL, shows a frieze in the form of a cove in which heraldic animals are supporters to cartouches with vases of acanthus-like leafage in between.

More interesting and entirely better in every quality are the friezes shown in Fig. 251, from SIZERGH HALL, WESTMORLAND, and Figs. 252 and 253, from the OLD PALACE, BROMLEY BY BOW. In the two latter examples the use of the tool in modelling will be clearly seen in the crisp, sharply defined outline of the leafage, the eyelet holes (practically speaking, drill holes) and the crisp cuttings or serrations of the leafage. The tendency to give something of the acanthus nature to the leafage is also very decorative and perhaps unusual.

Figs. 254 and 254A show something of the development of the strap-work of a somewhat grotesque character as applied to the frieze, and are average examples of the general mass of frieze work done through the Jacobean period.

DETAILS OF ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBAN CEILINGS.—Figs. 255 and 256 are

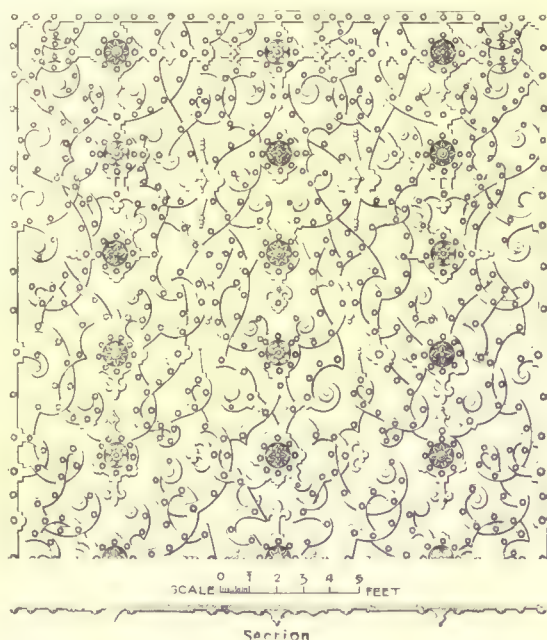
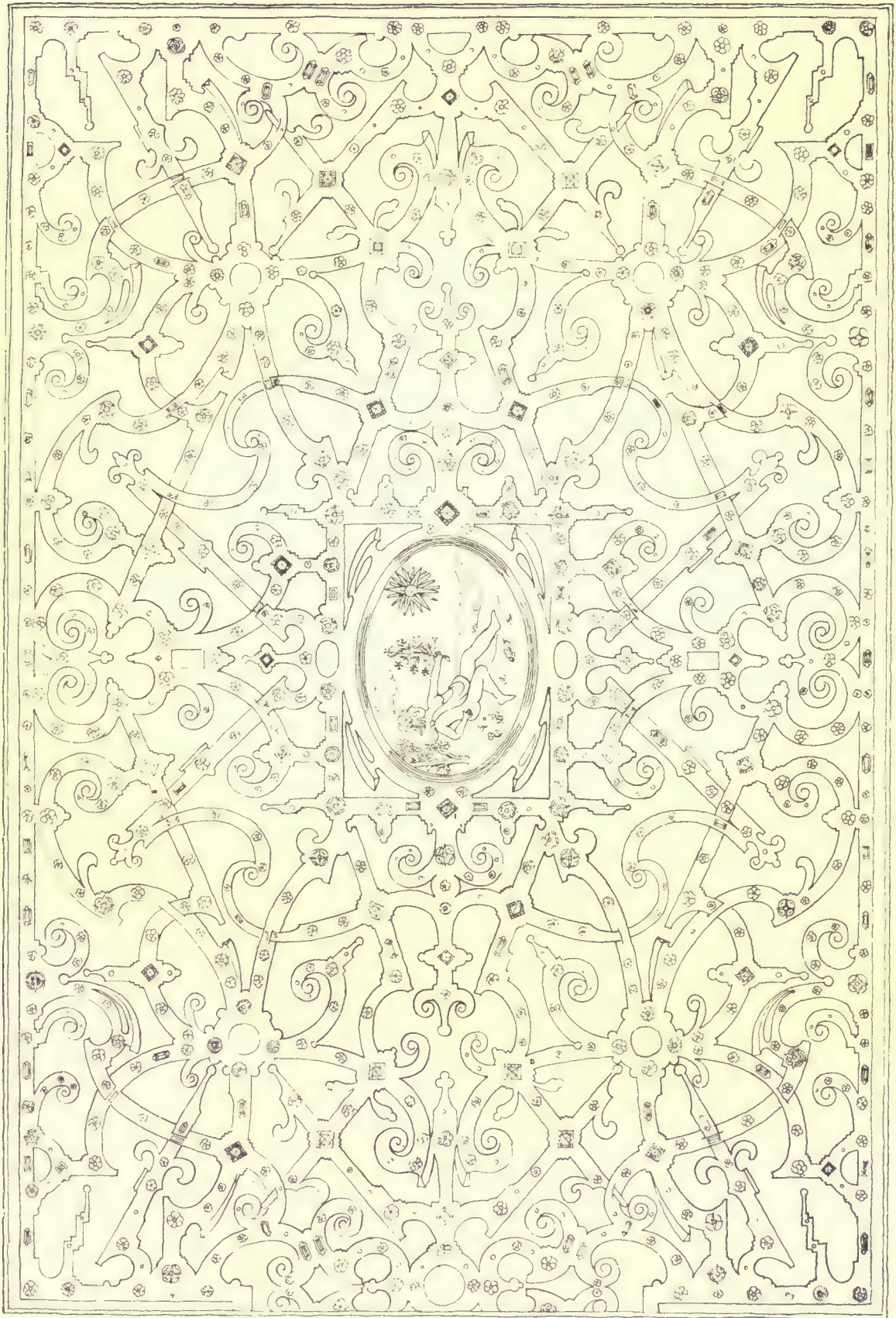


FIG. 268.—Half of Strap-work Ceiling, Audley End.



SCALE  $\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES = 1 FOOT

FIG. 269. PLAN OF CARVED PARLOUR CEILING, CREWE HALL, CHESHIRE.





FIG. 270.—PORTION OF CEILING OF LONG GALLERY, ASTON HALL, BIRMINGHAM.



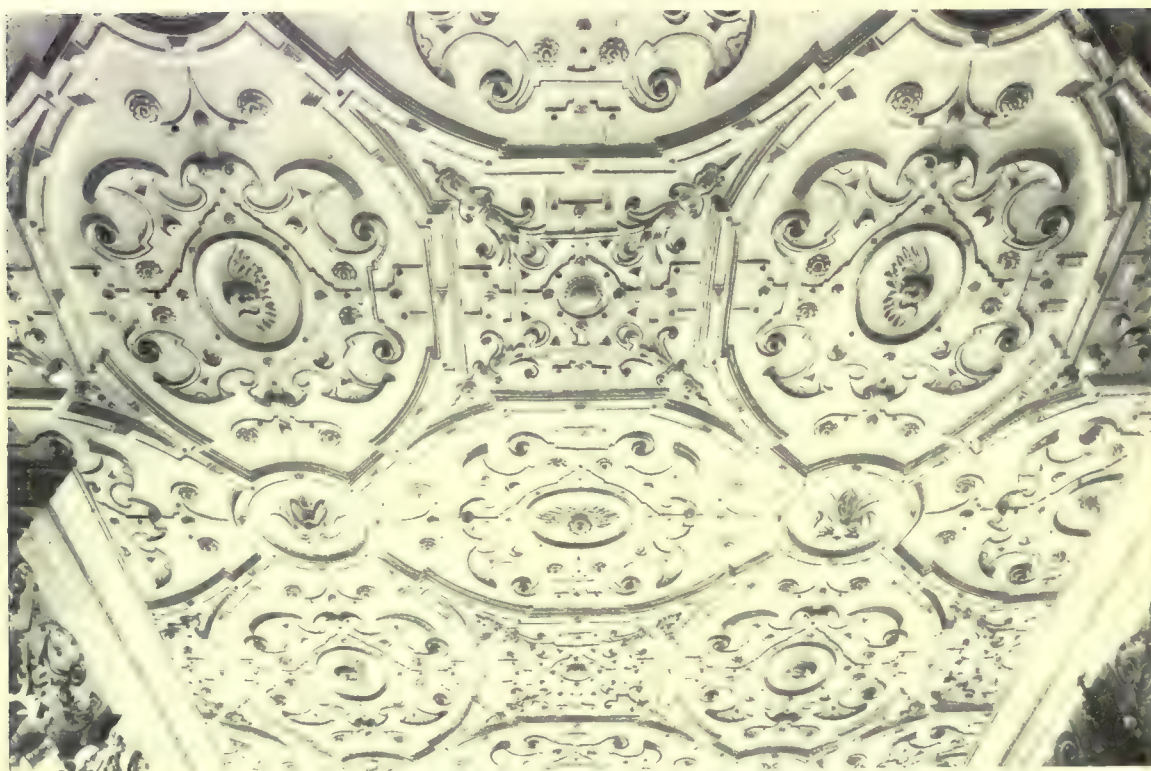


FIG. 271.—Portion of Great Chamber Ceiling, Aston Hall.



FIG. 272.—Emral Hall, Worthenbury, Flintshire (Wrexham).



given specially as enlarged details from the waggon-vaulted ceiling at CHASTLETON MANOR HOUSE, OXON., a general view of which is shown among the Jacobean ceilings in Fig. 278. The rosettes measure  $8\frac{3}{8}$  in. across, and are delightful in the decorative



FIG. 273.—At Benthall Hall, Shropshire.

*B. J. Fletcher del.*

setting. The use of the tool is also very noticeable in the lining of the petals and one of the roses, also the concave nature of the petals and the leafage is particularly suitable to the conventional working of plaster. In the accuracy and smoothness of the stem work, and the modelling of this ceiling throughout, there is distinct evidence





FIG. 274.—Portion of Ceiling at the Reindeer Inn, Banbury, Oxon.



FIG. 275.—Enlarged Enrichment of Ribs.



of the use of the tool, suggesting that it was executed *in situ*, and the leaves struck from a die.

Figs. 257 and 258 are shown in order to illustrate the heraldic filling of the panels of the ceiling from Sizergh Hall, Westmorland.



FIG. 276.—In the State Bedchamber, Boston House, Brentford

The decorative treatment of the hair in Fig. 258 is delightful, and might almost be taken to heart by our present-day toy makers. The comparison of this with the heraldic details from Plas Mawr, Conway (Figs. 155-161), will help to accentuate the purely decorative element as rendered by the plasterworker at this period.





FIG. 277.—The Drawing-room, Boston House.



FIG. 278 —Elevation of Portion of Ceiling Vault, Chastleton Manor House, Oxfordshire.



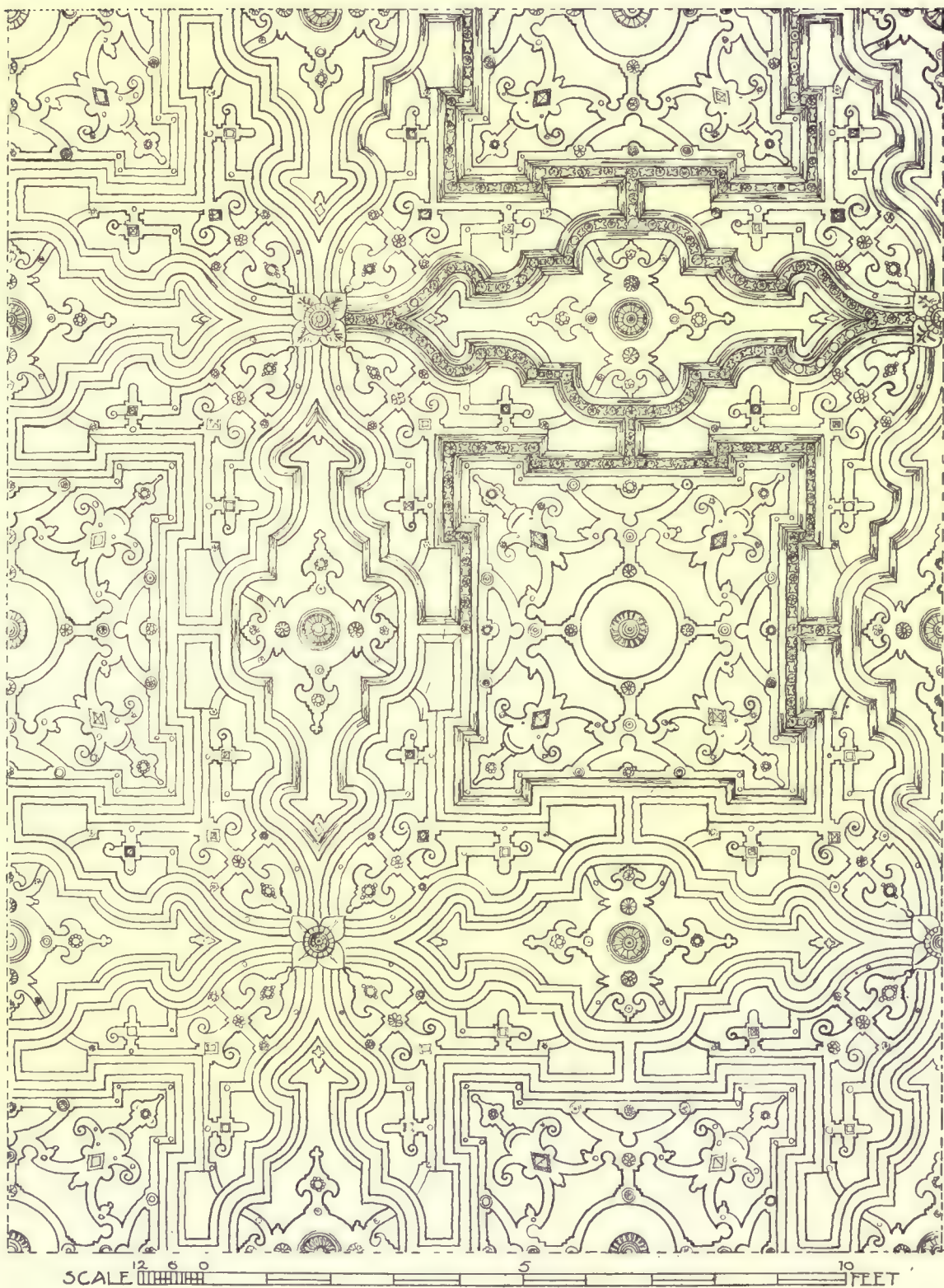


FIG. 279.—GREAT CAMPDEN HOUSE, KENSINGTON, W.





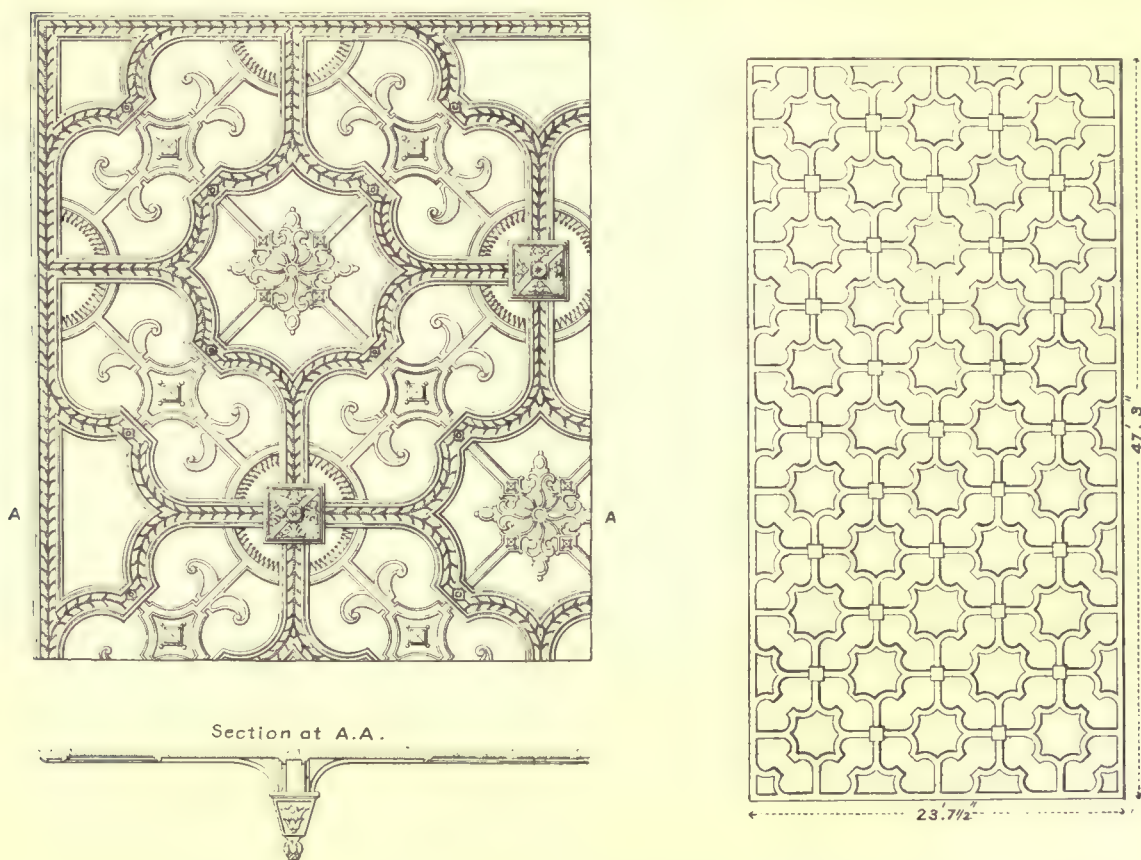
FIG. 280.—PLAN OF PORTION OF CEILING, GREAT ST HELENS, LONDON, E.C.



Figs. 259-264 are illustrative of the sprigs in the corners of the panels from the bay window at Sizergh Hall. They are shown in order to illustrate the delightfully simple and primitive, yet decorative character which the plasterer's work should have.

Fig. 265 shows in detail a panel from PAUL PINDAR'S HOUSE, in which the design is delightful, and the modelling on account of its softness is very pleasing. It would be well to notice that the leaves are all of them concave, some perhaps very slightly, but in all cases the edges are higher than the centre stem. This is very characteristic of the purer and early work.

Fig. 266 is another panel from the same ceiling. The conventional detail, and



FIGS. 281-283.—Plan, Pattern, and Section of Drawing-room Ceiling, Bramshill House, Hants.

treatment of the birds as a modeller sees them, is especially happy, as Fig. 174 shows the positions occupied by these panels.

The reign of James I. (1603-1625) was productive of much fine work, examples of which are to be seen at Audley End, Aston Hall, Crewe Hall, Bramshill House (not Bramhall Hall, 1521-92), Blickling Hall, Hatfield House, and many other places.

The chief characteristic of this period was the interlacing and intertwisting of narrow flat bands and scrolls, studded with tiny rosettes, pyramids, discs, and pellets, as at AUDLEY END (Fig. 268), BECKINGTON ABBEY, SOMERSET (Fig. 267), CREWE HALL (Fig. 269), a carved parlour.

Some of the ribs have narrow enrichments, generally rather finely modelled, as in the excellent examples of Jacobean design and treatment at ASTON HALL, WARWICKSHIRE, built between 1618 and 1635 (Fig. 270). Symmetry of form and balance invariably predominate. The panels are usually large and well filled, the centres having strap-work cartouches, oval or circular in form, inside strap-work, masks, heads (winged or otherwise), pyramids, rosettes, &c. (Fig. 271).

The strap-work bands are sometimes filleted on the outside edges, sometimes moulded. Other favourite ornaments are husks, scrolled cornucopiæ, beadings, strings of overlapping guilloche-like ornament, and rings.

The later enriched bands usually enclose square, circular, and heart-shaped panels, generally broken out near the intersections, and on the sides. The character of the modelled ornament is symmetrical in treatment, with a strong tendency to Renaissance formation in low relief.

This type of modelled detail is fairly represented. A somewhat later example is given from Emral, Flintshire, an interesting house illustrating several building periods, but now very much decayed. The curved surface of the ceiling is divided into strap-work panels, which enclose modelled reliefs representing the labours of Hercules. The smaller connecting panels have the signs of the Zodiac (Fig. 272).

During the early part of Charles I.'s reign [the principle of design remained much the same, but towards the latter part of it the influence of Inigo Jones and Peter Paul Rubens affected the style a good deal (*vide infra*, Chap. X.). The "Palladian" character of the design of that period may be attributed to Inigo Jones' arrival in England after his second visit to Italy *c.* 1614.

At BENTHALL HALL, SHROPSHIRE, is an excellent example of a Jacobean ceiling. Divided into six rectangular panels by cornice and strap soffited beams, they are filled with strap-work enrichment, surrounding an oval shaped boss. The strap-work patterns are different in each case, and show considerable skill in obtaining a balance of enrichment with variety of detail in the disposition of the strap-work lines (Fig. 273).

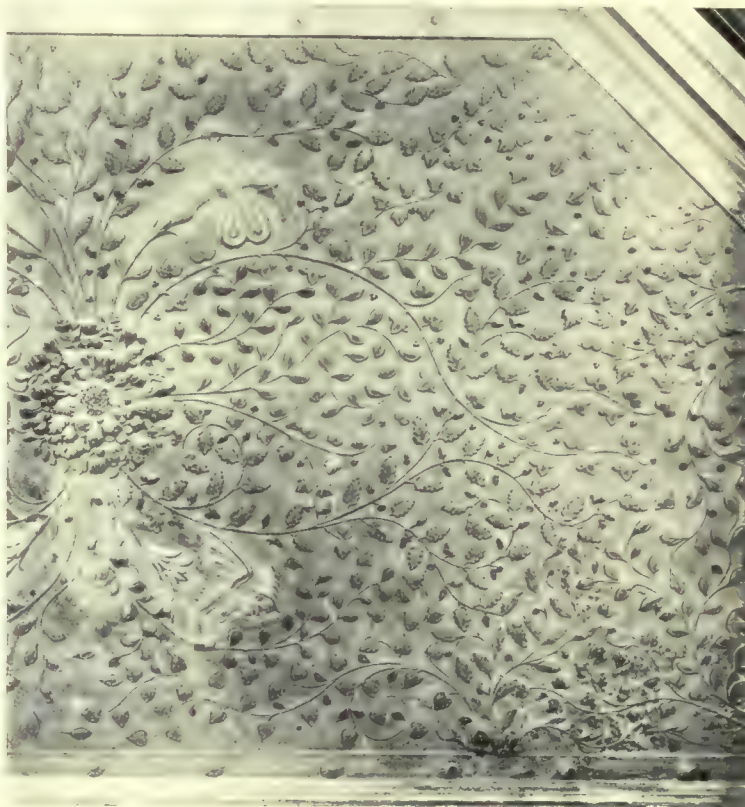


FIG. 284.—Plan of Portion of Bay Window in Library, Audley End, Essex.





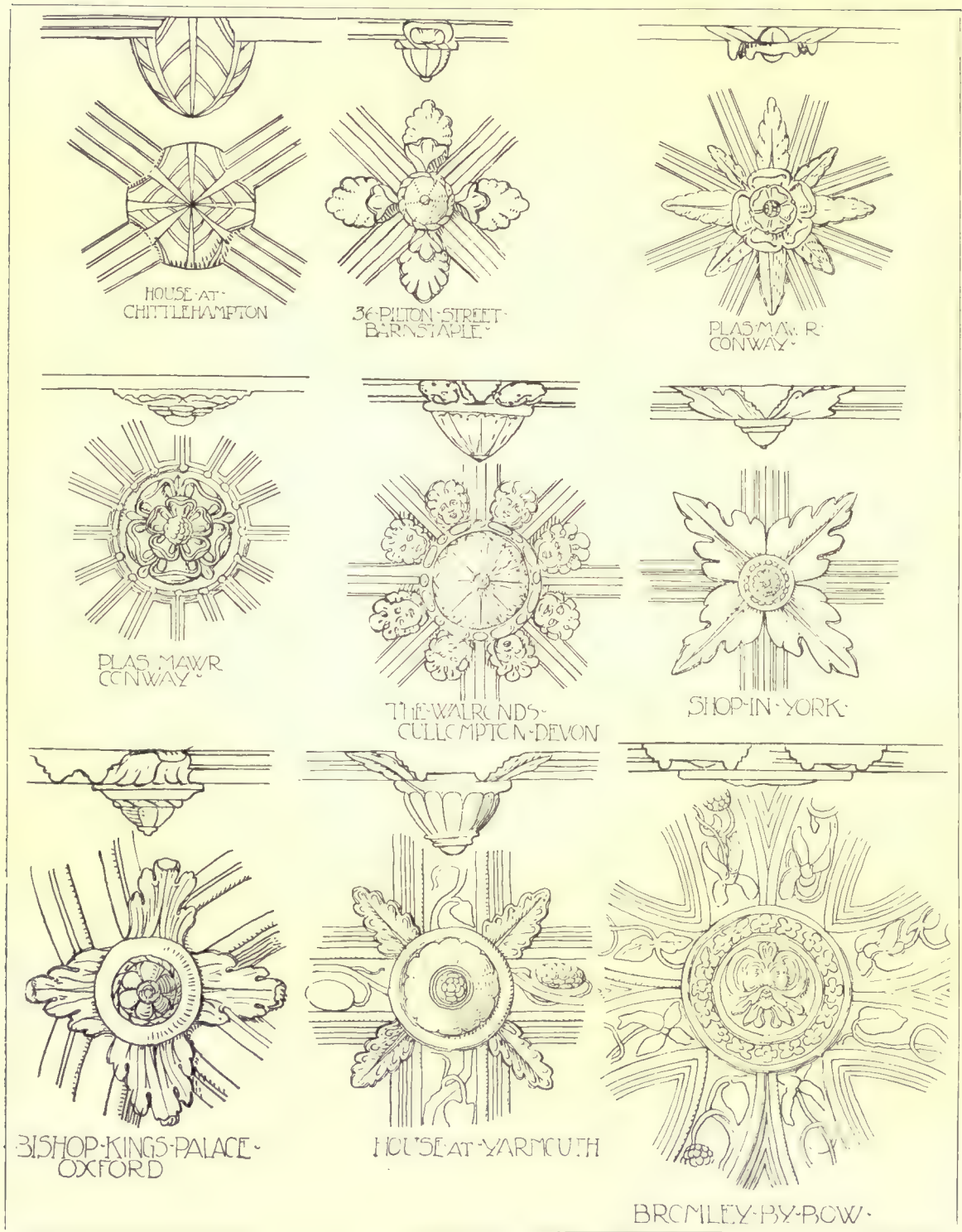


FIG. 286.—PENDANT BOSSES.



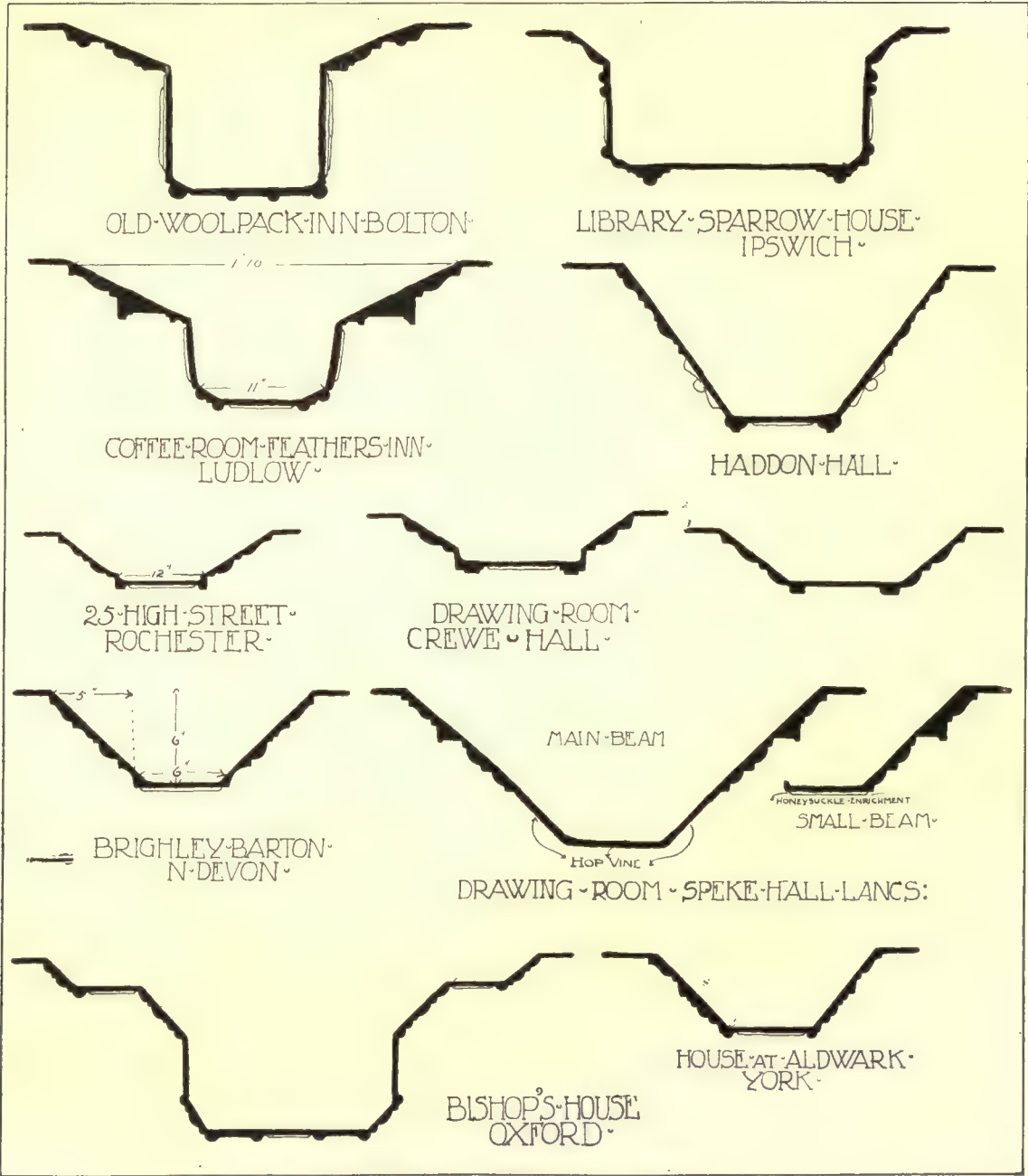


FIG. 287.—BEAM SECTIONS.

The ceiling of REINDEER INN, BANBURY, is also thoroughly Jacobean in detail, dating about 1637 (Figs. 274 and 275).

The ribs are of considerable strength, moulded on edge, and showing symmetrically balanced modelled enrichment of great delicacy of detail. It is interesting to notice that the enrichment in places has been outlined with the modelling tool. This incised outline helps to give a crispness and strength to the enrichment which otherwise might be overpowered by the rather prominent moulding surrounding it (Fig. 275).

BOSTON HOUSE, BRENTFORD.—The ceiling in the state bedroom is another example of Jacobean workmanship (Fig. 276), and is somewhat similar in treatment to the drawing-room ceiling (Fig. 277). It will be seen from these illustrations that the ceiling surface is divided into square and oblong panels, broken into semicircular and segmental cusplings, and the ends and sides connected at the cardinal points by short cross ribs with pendants. The panels are filled with cartouches containing allegorical figures; the lesser and diagonal panels contain the usual flat strap-work. In both examples the modelling of the detail on the ribs is exceedingly slight and delicate; the mouldings are fine, and worked with greater accuracy than it would have been a few years earlier.

CHASTLETON MANOR (Fig. 278) is a much purer and more interesting example than many, *e.g.*, Fig. 279. The rib, which is an extremely narrow one, forms an interlacing mesh of delicate rib and panel work on the surface of the segmental vault. At the springing of the vault is a wide belt of flat mouldings, with bands of symmetrical treatment and of short repeat contained between them. The panels formed by the interlacing ribs are filled with fleurs-de-lis in the lesser, while rosettes, buds, and leafage terminate the cusplings of the larger panels,—the whole ceiling having a pleasing, though thinnish effect. Larger figures of the rosettes are shown in Figs. 255 and 256.

GREAT CAMPDEN HOUSE, KENSINGTON (Fig. 279), has a ceiling of Jacobean character which is similar in its setting and detail to the two foregoing examples. This arrangement of plan in the abstract is played upon so much, only the detail being varied much, that the whole of the ceilings of this period bear great and unmistakable resemblance to one another. It is noticeable that the space between the rib mouldings, instead of being modelled with scrolled leafage, and floral ornament, as at the Reindeer Inn, Great St Helens, and other examples, is filled with tiny rosettes and rectangular quatrefoil panels sunk below the general surface of rib. Other examples of this period are illustrated in Figs. 280-283.

A general idea of the moulding of the ceiling ribs of the various periods is clearly shown in Fig. 214, in which the order of their development is shown as clearly as possible. Some sections of cornice mouldings, with friezes, &c., are in like manner classified on a sheet in Fig. 285.

Pendentives, pendant bosses, and pendants are shown in Figs. 204-207, 213, and 286. A sheet of various beam sections is given opposite, Fig. 287.

Towards the latter end of James I.'s reign the plasterer's art reached Scotland, to which the following chapter is devoted (*vide infra*, Chap. VIII.).



## CHAPTER VIII.

## SCOTTISH PLASTERWORK.

THE sixteenth century in Scotland brought great changes in the life of the people. It was found unnecessary to keep up the towers and keeps, which were practically nothing more than places of defence with hall and dungeon. Of this relaxation and feeling of security came the domestic architecture the English aspect of which was dealt with in the sixth chapter.

Withdrawing-rooms, dining-rooms, galleries, and reception chambers were added, and these were then decorated, at first simply, and later extravagantly, with stucco and plaster ornamentation.

Nearly all the known plasterwork in Scotland is of the seventeenth century—though, perhaps, here and there some pieces of sixteenth-century work may be found. The early work was very simple, and not until later, when there was freer intercourse between the races north and south of the Tweed, did the style of the north become richer.

Some of the Scottish work shows marked French influence, and there is no doubt but that this influence percolated into Scotland from England at a later date, as the style gradually moved in a north-westerly direction.

As in England, the earlier ceilings of Scotland were made up of single moulded ribs; of enriched bands, with panel decorations; simple moulded cornices, and quaint ornaments, such as thistles, roses, fleurs-de-lis, lions, and other heraldic forms, were freely introduced, and the panels were usually filled with floral patterns and sprays of ornament. There was much variety of treatment in the use which was made of narrow moulded ribs, wider flat moulded ribs, and enriched ribs combined with mouldings either side, of simple form, or elaborate detail. The forms of the mouldings which made up the ribs and bands varied a good deal, as will be noticed (Fig. 288). Beads, filleted ogees—concave and convex, flat members, and fascias, rather more simply set and quaintly disposed than in England. The moulded rib at Berwick-on-Tweed (Fig. 291) shows an exceptional profile. A general comparison of dates and mouldings shows that about 1640 the character of the detail and modelling became somewhat heavier. Each generation brought with it some change in their character. As in the south, some of the ribs were “run” by the eye and hand, others were guided by rods, and some were done from a rough model. In the earlier work the ornament was modelled in the raw plaster by hand, with metal tools, or with the fingers, and by the freshness and quaintness of this work it is easily distinguished from the work of the subsequent periods, which was cast from moulds of wood or plaster. Flemish and Italian artists, assisted by native workmen, were chiefly responsible for the designs and the work of the plasterer in Scotland. Unlike our present

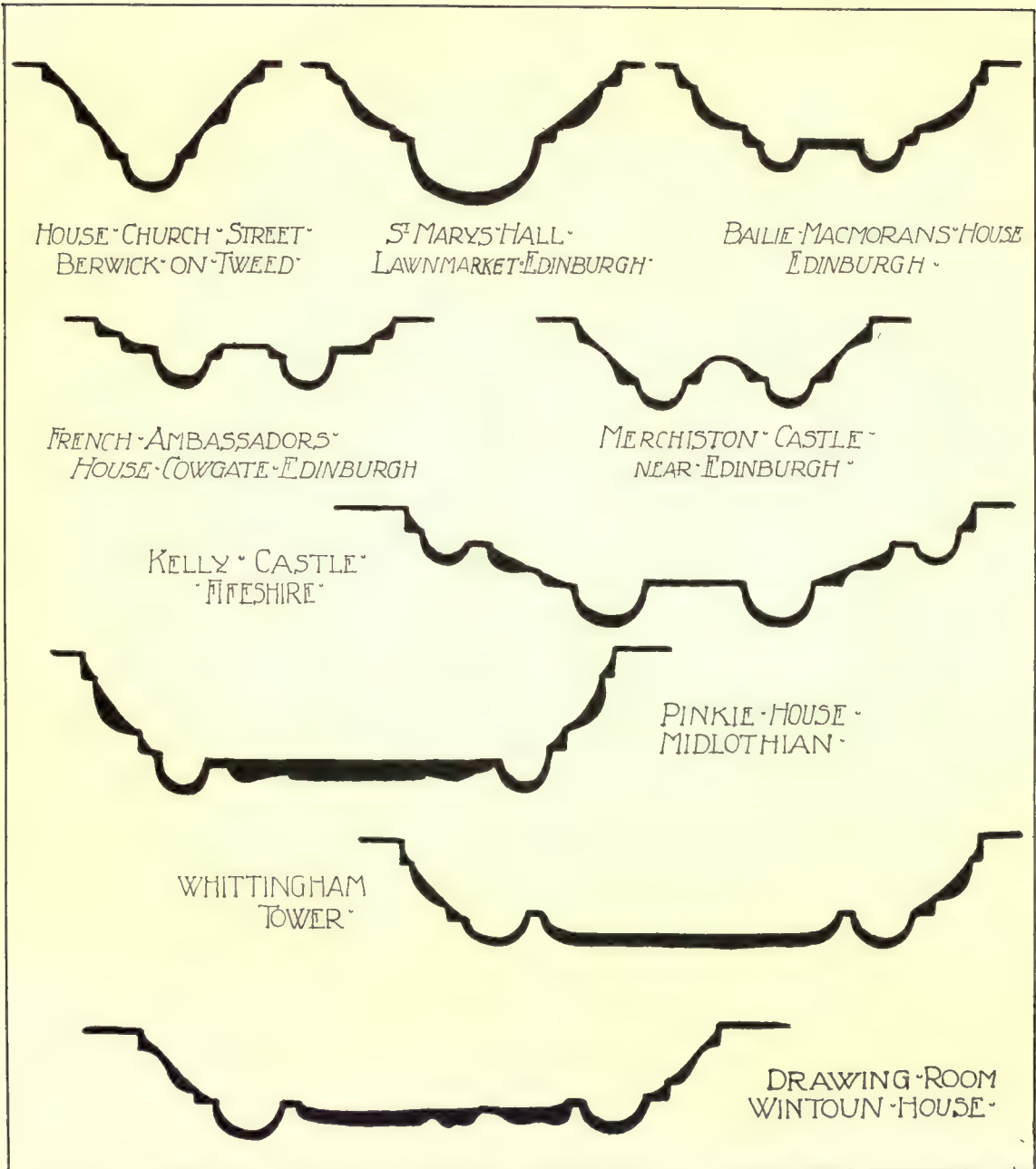


FIG. 288.—MOULDINGS.



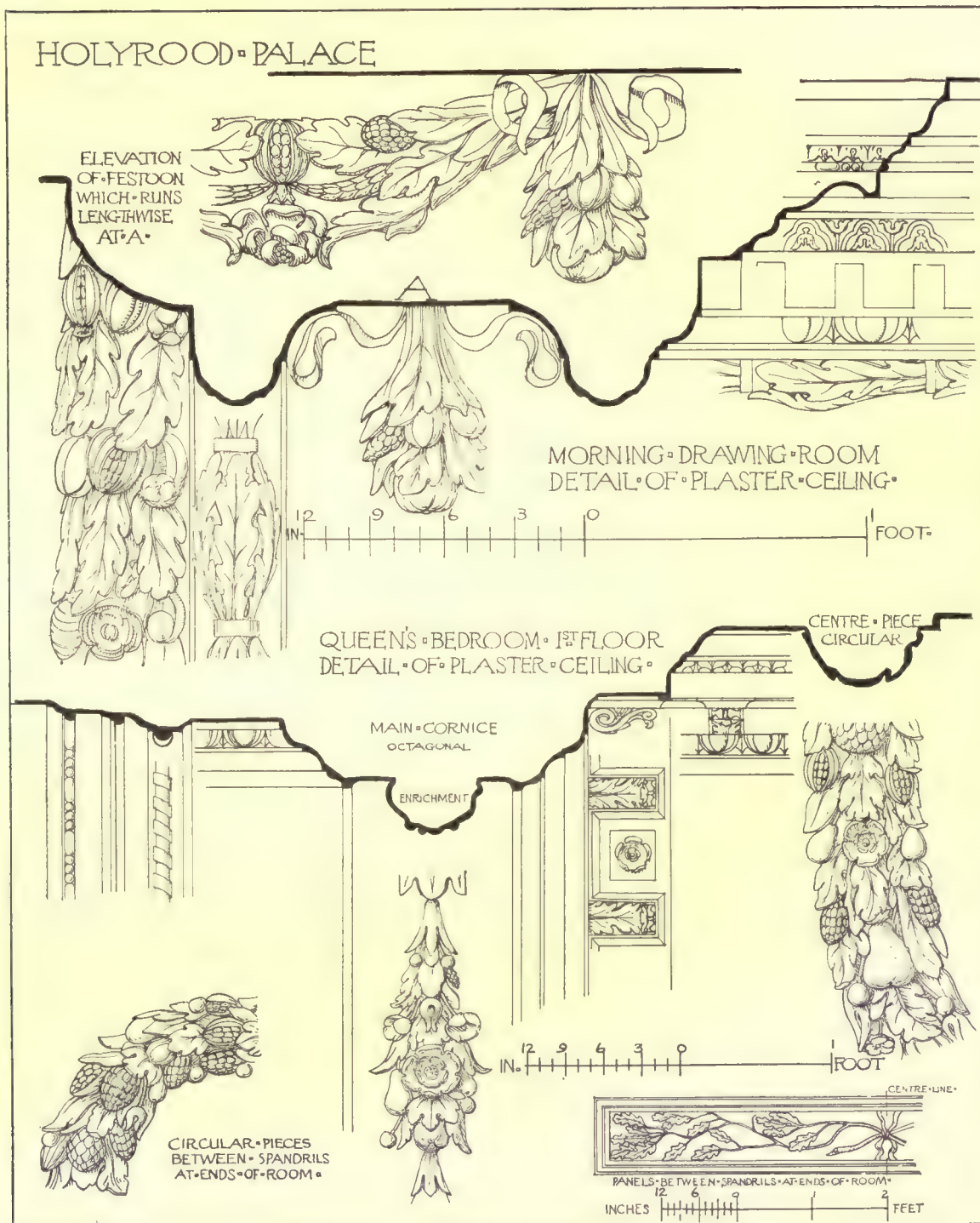


FIG. 289.—ENRICHMENTS AND MOULDINGS FROM CEILINGS IN HOLYROOD PALACE.

work, the rough, tough, well-seasoned plaster was spread on the internal walls, and the ribs and modelling applied direct, in solid form. The more sharply defined, mechanical, and regular *cast* work is easily distinguished from that of the earlier period, which, with its soft free lines, was executed *in situ*. The system of casting from moulds was undeniably quicker and more expeditious and cheaper than working direct on the ceiling, and probably cost was just as important a consideration then as now. As the demand for such work increased it was more easily met by casting the ornament, and no more need be said about it. Undoubtedly the same bodies of workmen passed from one house to another, taking their models



FIG. 290.—Bedroom Ceiling, Wemyss Castle.

and moulds with them, and there is proof of the fact in the illustrations of detail from ceilings with which these pages are illustrated.

Since each had its distinctive character, a comparison of Scottish Renaissance architecture with English would be instructive, but the sermon is after all in the stone (and plaster), and the differences, such as they are, of style can be made clearer by the illustrations than by the means at a writer's disposal.

The chief decoration when wanted was applied to the ceilings of the principal living apartments. At first very light and simple, towards the middle and latter part of the seventeenth century it became richer and fuller of detail, and the main ceiling divisions broader and stronger. Later on the enrichment became



heavier, and more deeply undercut, in the setting of fruit and leafage, and was largely modelled by hand.

But still in some of these later ceilings the decoration was partly cast; the small and loose detail being tucked into place by the modeller's hand.

BALVAIRD CASTLE (1561).—Hall, and story above. Fragments of frieze, pendants, &c.

STOBHALL, PERTHSHIRE, DOWERY HOUSE (1571).—The staircase consists of a central band of scroll-work, with stars, thistles, roses, and masks, and winged heads

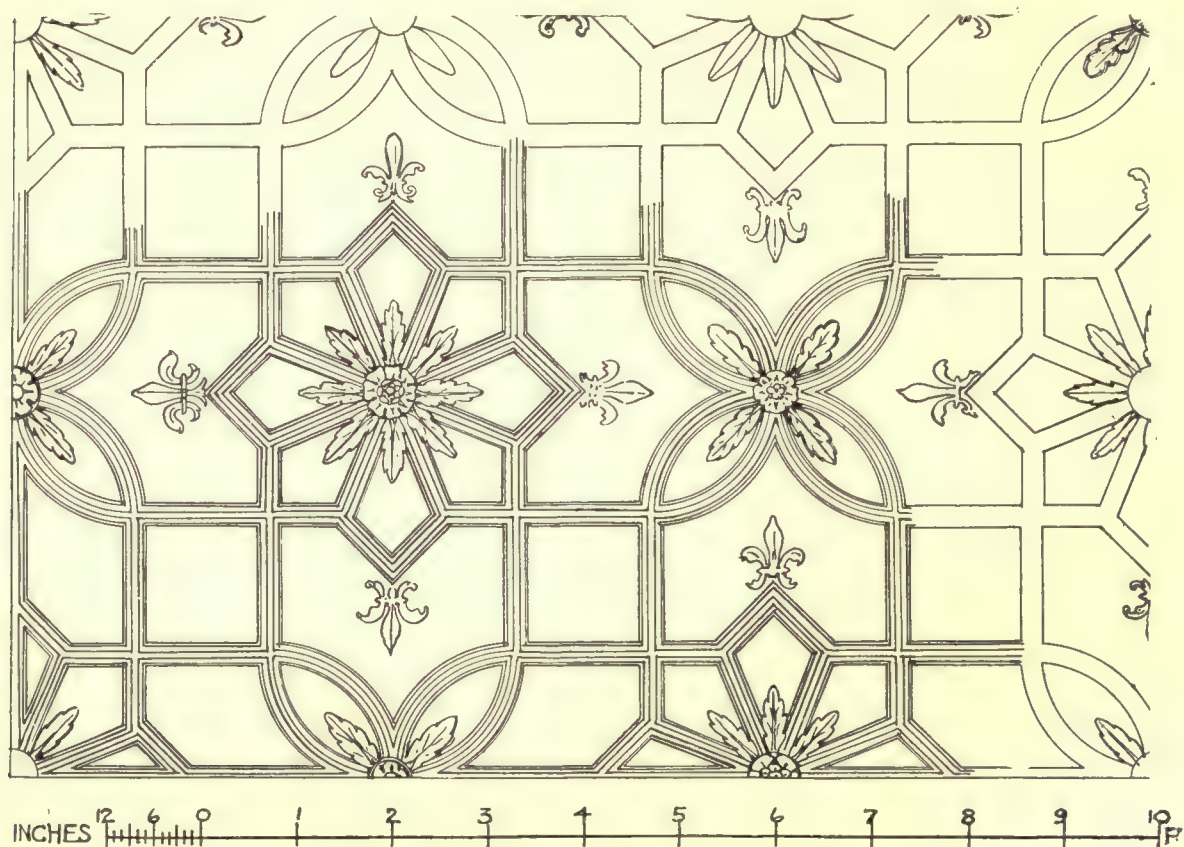


FIG. 291.—Church Street, Berwick-on-Tweed.

between the scroll-work and cornice. The cornice is a plain moulded one, with enriched frieze and architrave.

WEMYSS CASTLE, FIFESHIRE (sixteenth century).—Contains in one of the bedrooms a very interesting example of a ceiling (Fig. 290) composed of wide bands of soft mouldings (without the usual central enrichments) in square and rectangular curve-ended hexagonal panels, and half panels, connected by short pieces of the same moulding.

All these panels have winged figures carrying the palm aloft in the one hand and the rose in the other. Winged heads and fleurs-de-lis occupy the square panels, while the side half panels have similar heads without the wings and

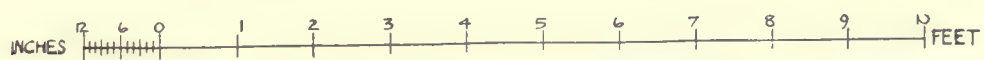
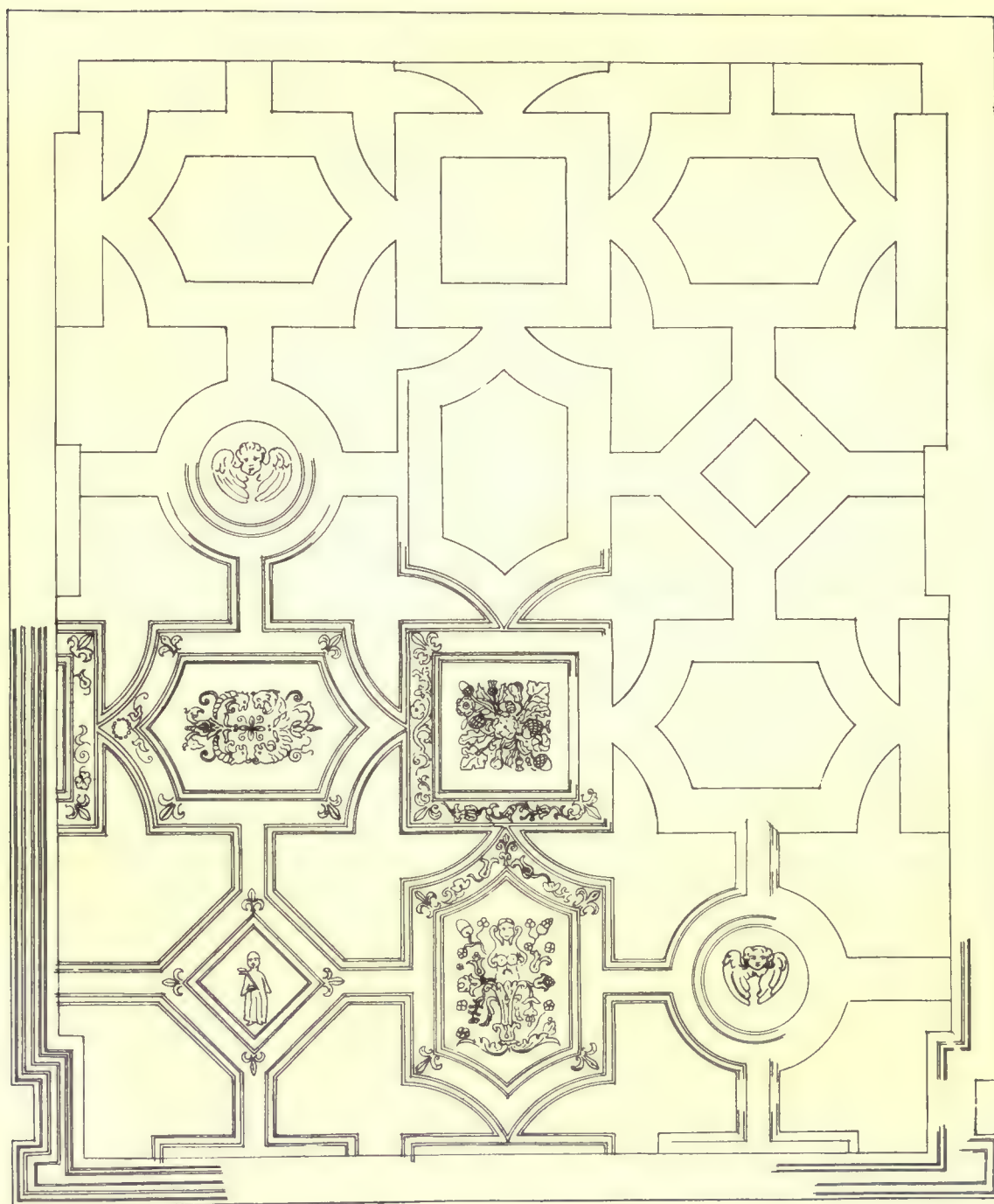


FIG. 292.—WHITTINGEHAME TOWER.



fleurs-de-lis, and the circles and semicircles carry large or smaller stars. The relief of the modelling is somewhat dull and full. The simple moulded cornice runs by the moulded ribs in an inconsiderate manner by having a deep fillet and bead at the top.

EARLSHALL, FIFESHIRE (about one mile from the village of Leuchars) (sixteenth century).—On the first floor, entering from the wheel stair, is the hall, 37 feet 6 inches by 18 feet 6 inches. In the centre of the ceiling is a circular panel formed by a moulded rib, from which a four-panelled pendant springs, finishing on to a moulded terminal.

BONHARD, LINLITHGOW (1591).—Here we have some of the most interesting



FIG. 293.—The Hall of Craigievar Castle.

examples of various arrangements, simple and refined in detail. The ribs mitre into the upper members of the cornice. The modelling of the panel spaces is light and dainty, and small bosses and radiating leafage form the chief part of the decoration.

CRATHES CASTLE, KINCARDINESHIRE (1596).—On the first floor the portion over the two western cellars is occupied by the hall, 30 feet by 18 feet 8 inches, which has a semicircular vault ornamented with plaster panelling, and carved stone pendants (stucco?).

CHURCH STREET, BERWICK-ON-TWEED (1650).—Contains perhaps one of the best examples, but the date is uncertain.

A rectangular room on the ground floor, facing the street, contains a ceiling neither particularly Scottish nor English in character, made up of modelled single ribs of interlacing and uniform pattern, semicircular ended, containing star-shaped pendant bosses, and radiating leafage covering the mitre. The rib section appears to be quite unique. The ornament, like the building itself, is quite simple and unpretentious (Fig. 291).

WHITTINGHAME TOWER, HADDINGTON, EAST LoTHIAN (1600-1625).—The dining-room (Fig. 292) has a ceiling of broad, enriched ribs, forming square, circular, lozenge, rectangular, and hexagonal panels, containing enrichment and animal forms. The ornament here is obscured by the coats of whitening it has received.

This is similar to Wintoun House, Moray House, and other seventeenth-century buildings. The ribs do not mitre or pick up with the cornice, the first member of which has a deep fillet on which the ribs stop.

CRAIGIEVAR CASTLE, ABERDEENSHIRE (1610-26).—Fig. 293 contains some excellent examples of seventeenth-century workmanship.

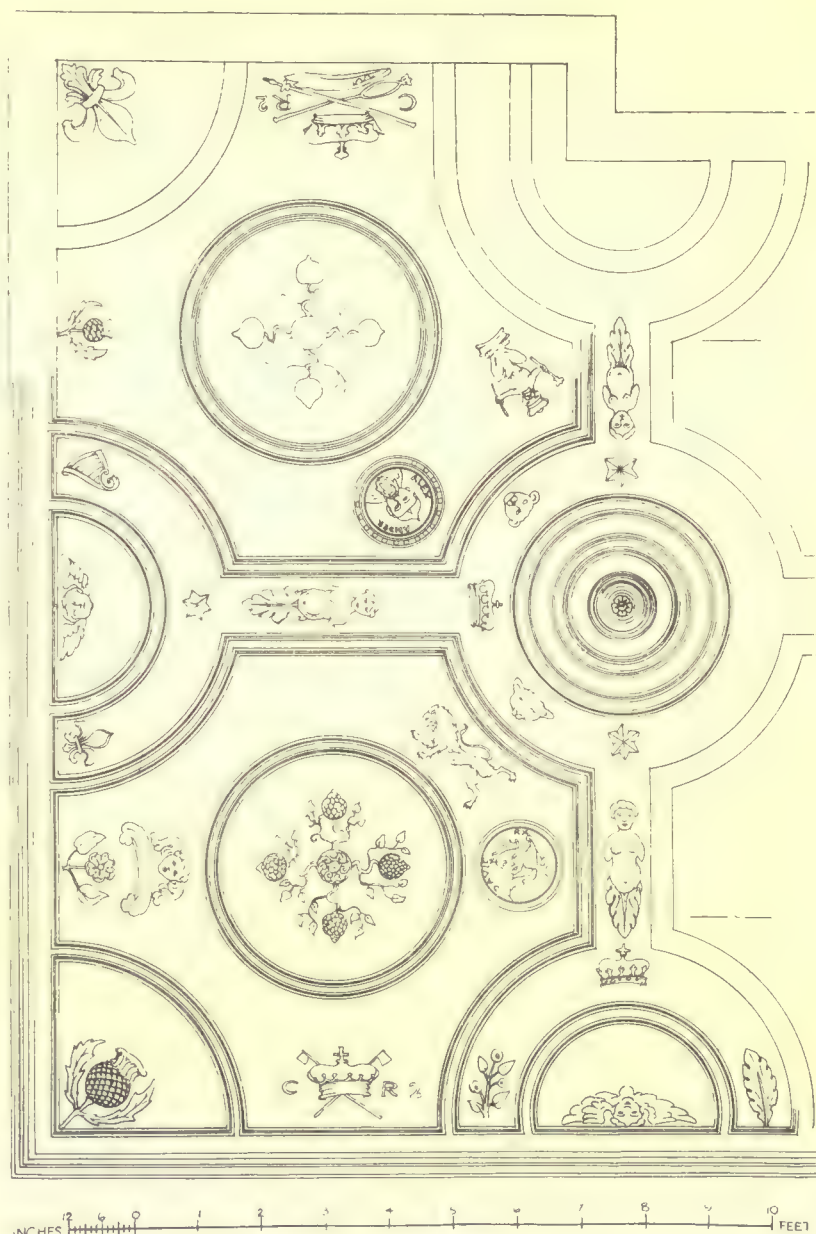


FIG. 294.—Merchiston Castle.

The ceiling of the hall has the old Scottish type of vaulting, the centre portion being groined, as at Moray House, with large pendants. The panels have stucco ornament, a huge chimney-piece, ornamented with carved work, with the Royal Arms in a panel above it. One notices in this example a wide, enriched



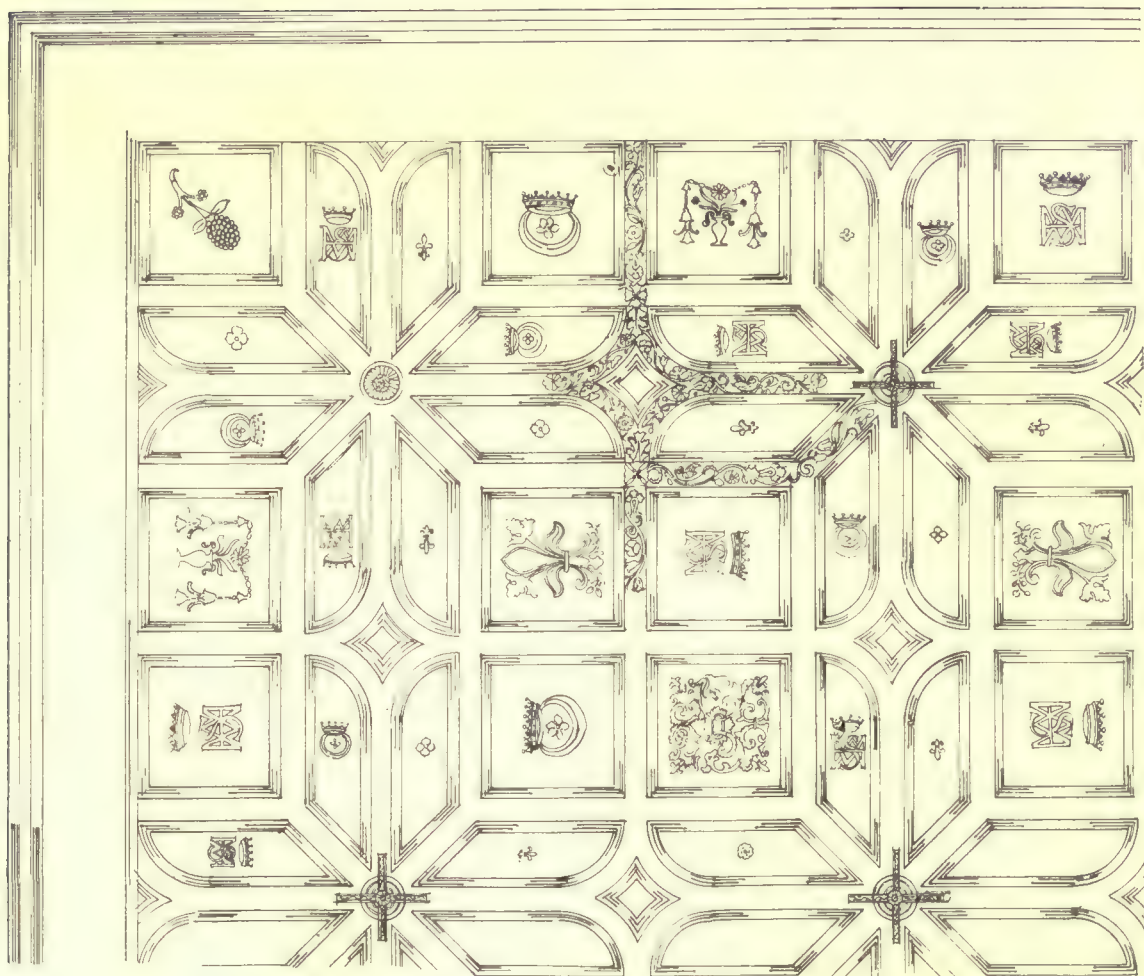


FIG. 295.—King Charles' Room, Pinkie House, Musselburgh.

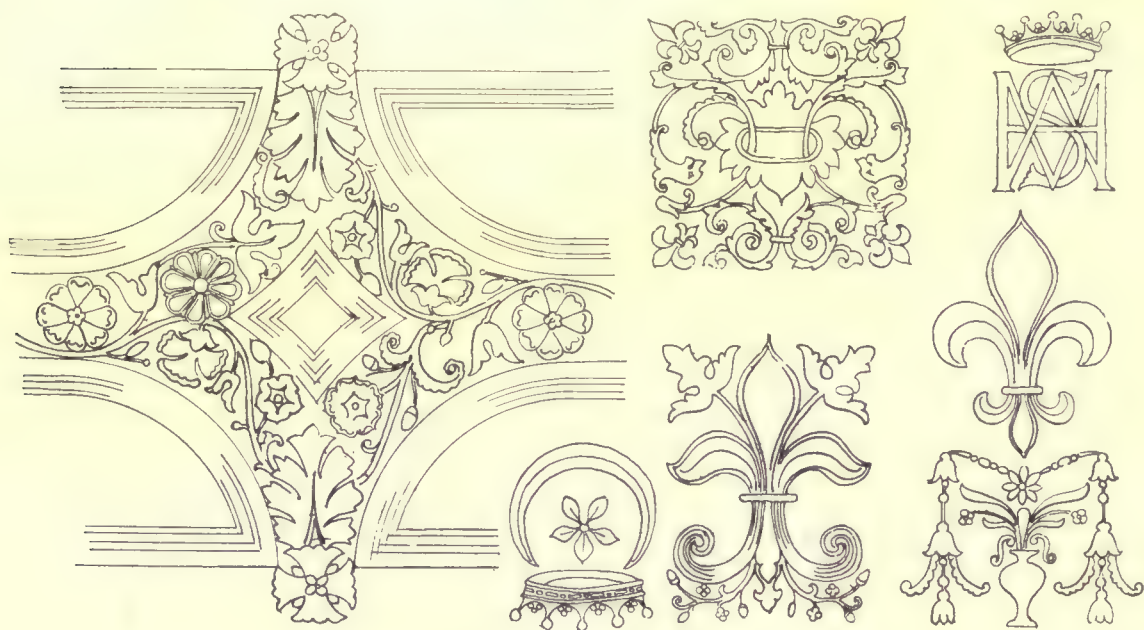


FIG. 296.—Details of Fig. 295.

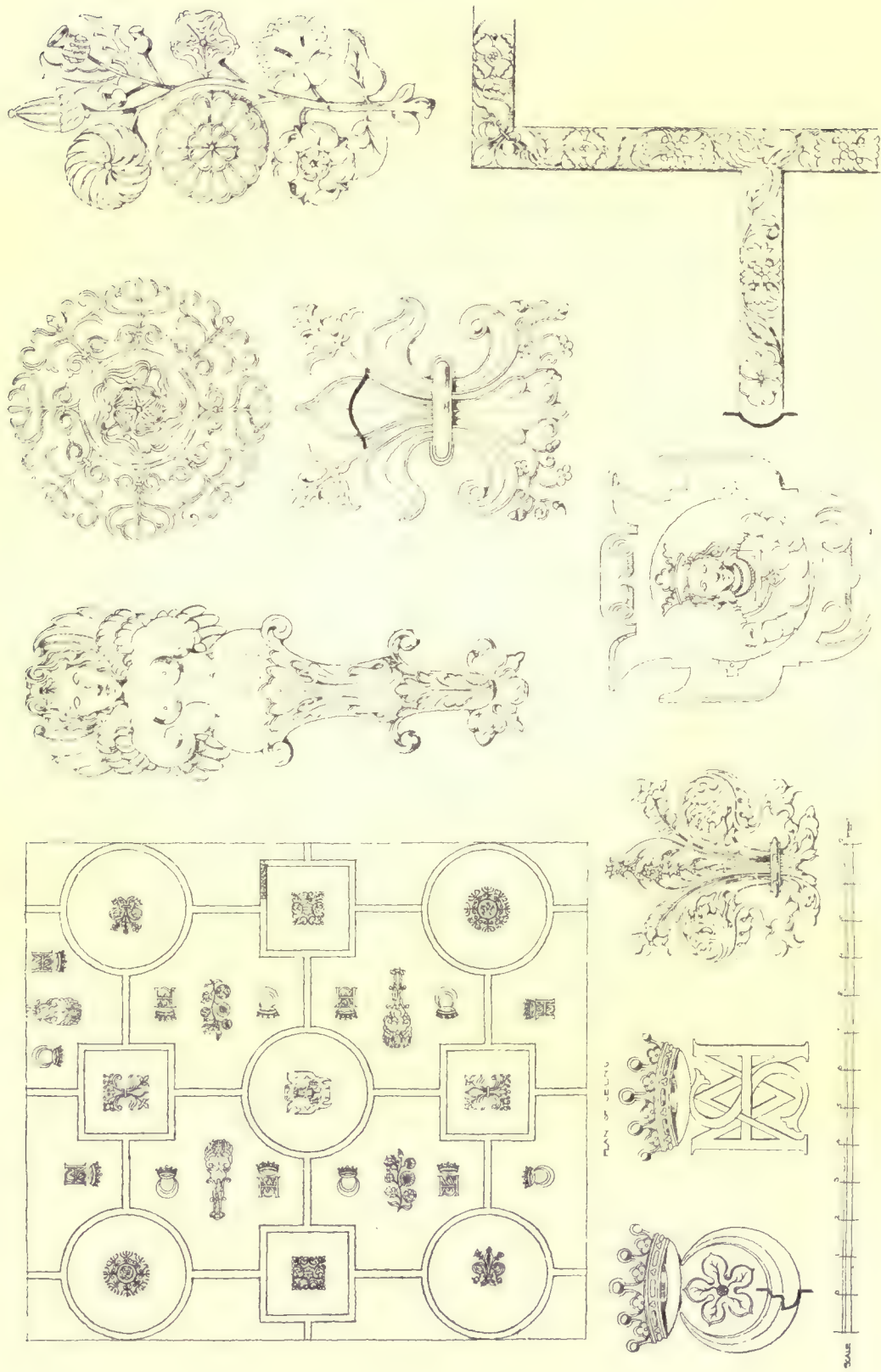


FIG. 297.—THE GREEN ROOM, PINKIE HOUSE.



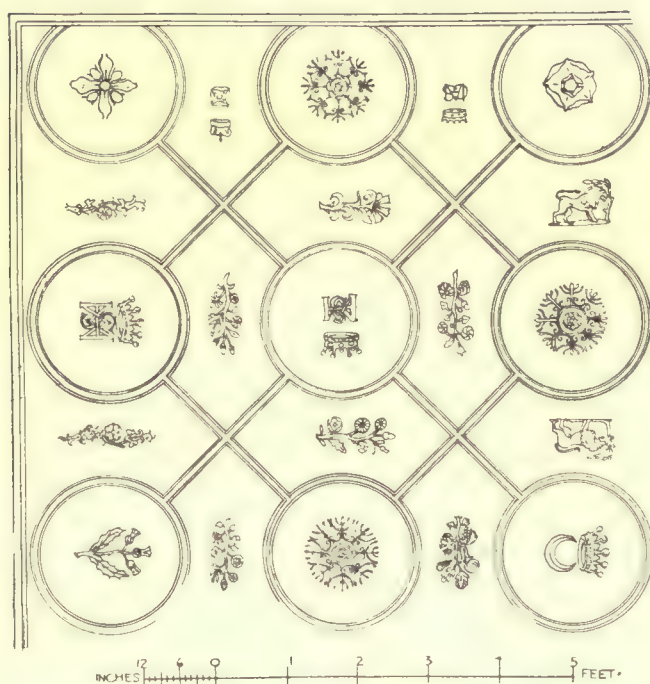


FIG. 298. Pinkie House.

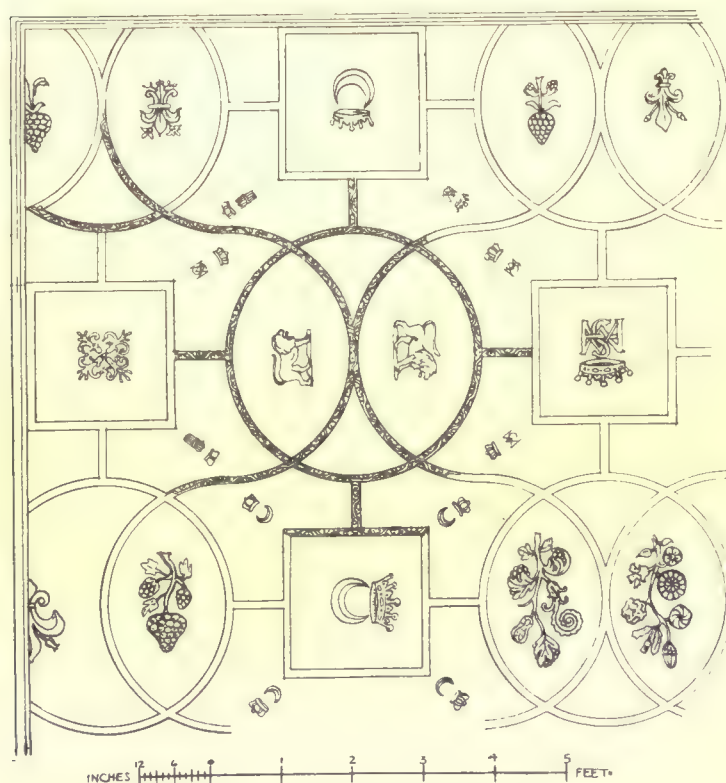


FIG. 299.—Pinkie House.

architrave, running round under the vault, immediately at the intersection of the smaller vault. An exceptionally fine example of the work of this period. The upper floor has several bedrooms, with ceilings of plain-moulded ribs, and terminal enrichments of large fleur-de-lis shape, of acanthus-like leafage.

The ceiling in the "panelled room" is divided by a wide, moulded, and enriched rib, based on the cruciform interlacing square, with rounded ends, and with radiating ribs in each direction, forming star-shaped panels on every hand, and moulded and piped bosses at the intersections of the stars. The centres of the cruciform panels

contain circular enriched modillions, with coats of arms, while other panels at the side contain circular enrichments of more Gothic tendency.

The curvings terminate with vigorously modelled fleurs-de-lis. The enrichment of the ribs is somewhat full in the relief of the modelling, which is composed of, and based on, a twirling conventional arrangement of honeysuckle and other plant form.

The cornice is of simple mouldings, of little depth, with the remains of a frieze below.

Another ceiling in the "Play Room" has an enriched and moulded cornice, splayed out at a slight angle from the flat of the wall,

from the top members of which single ribs of acute section divide the ceiling area up

into squares, each side of which is of semicircular form, with diagonal ribs forming lozenge-shaped panels crossing each square. These lozenge-shaped panels contain discs with heads modelled in them, while from each side of the central lozenge large angular enrichments partly fill in the area formed by the semicircles breaking out of the square. At the intersections of the squares vigorously modelled leaves radiate. The intermediary squares are occupied by circular discs, containing the head and shoulders of Alexander and other heroes.

The ceiling of another room is made up of squares, octagons, and quatrefoils, deeply moulded on either side, with circular and angular enrichments (similar to the "Play Room" ceiling) occupying the panels. This ceiling shows traces of

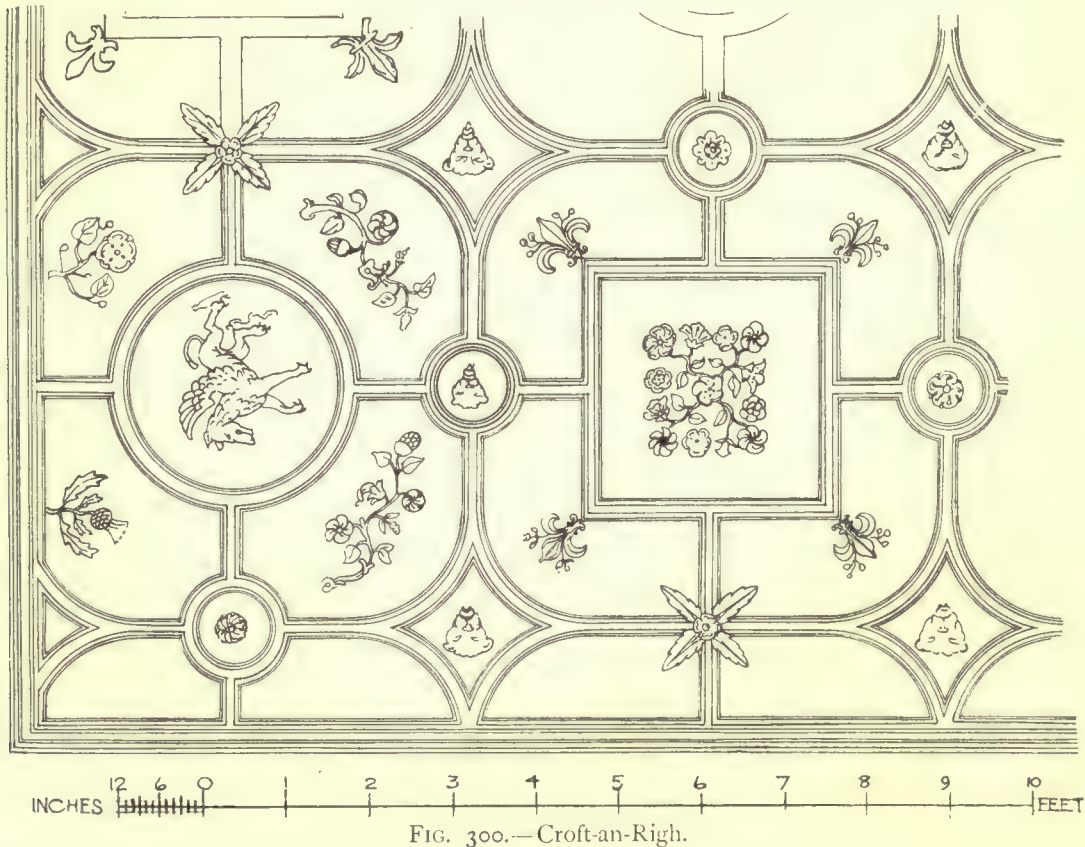


FIG. 300.—Croft-an-Righ.

Italian workmanship in the mannerism of the design and modelling, and is rich in the strength and contrast of its relief.

MERCHISTON CASTLE, EDINBURGH (early seventeenth century).—Has a fine ceiling in the east room, on the first floor, of a different type to any of the foregoing examples (Fig. 294).

The centre of the ceiling has circles of double moulded ribs, with inner moulded circular ribs leading up to a rather large moulded pendant in the centre circle. Next the side and end walls are similar half circles, connected and united with the centre circles by two moulded ribs of the same section. The panels formed between the centre circle and semicircles have inner circles containing



sprays, stars, harps, figures, winged heads, and other smaller enrichments between the mouldings of the circles and panels. It is in this ceiling that the mask of Alexander, and David with a harp, are represented.

The cornice is composed of simple run mouldings of the usual kind.

PINKIE HOUSE, MUSSELBURGH, MIDLOTHIAN (1613).—Has most excellent plaster ceilings. The ceiling of King Charles' Bedroom is one of a type to be found in many sixteenth and seventeenth century baronial houses in Scotland.

The room is about 20 feet square. Springing from a simple cornice is a plain cove, crowned at top by an enriched moulding, from which the enriched moulded ribs spring into another, dying away into the flat centre part of the ceiling proper.

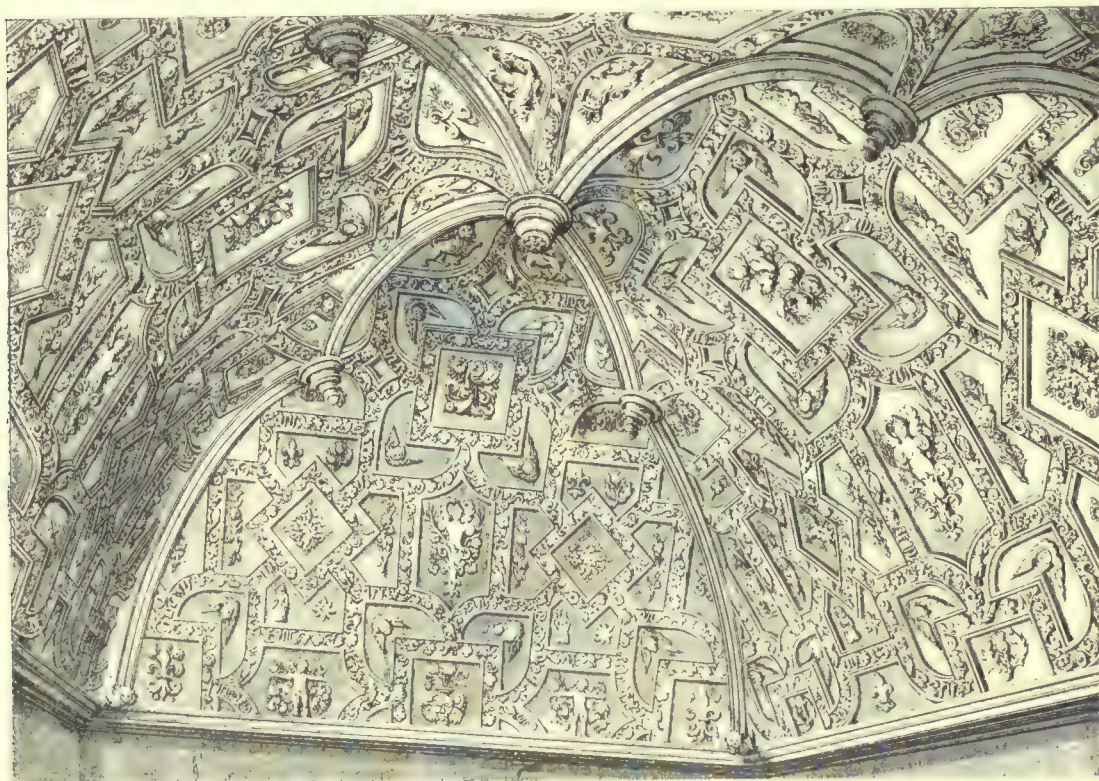


FIG. 301.—Vaulted Ceiling in the North Room (First Floor), Moray House, Canongate, Edinburgh.

This flat portion is subdivided into four whole and eight half squares, connected anglewise by enriched ribs which are brought down into large pendants; each square is divided into four lesser panels, each containing floral enrichment and heraldic devices, monograms, coronets, &c. (Figs. 295, 296).

In another room, called the "Green Room," we have almost a square room, about 13 feet by 14 feet, divided up into square and circular panels, and connected by narrow ribs of vigorous enrichment, unbounded by mouldings; square and circular enrichments occupy these panels, whilst others have monograms, crescents, and coronets as before (Fig. 297).

Another room has a ceiling made up entirely of circles, connected diagonally

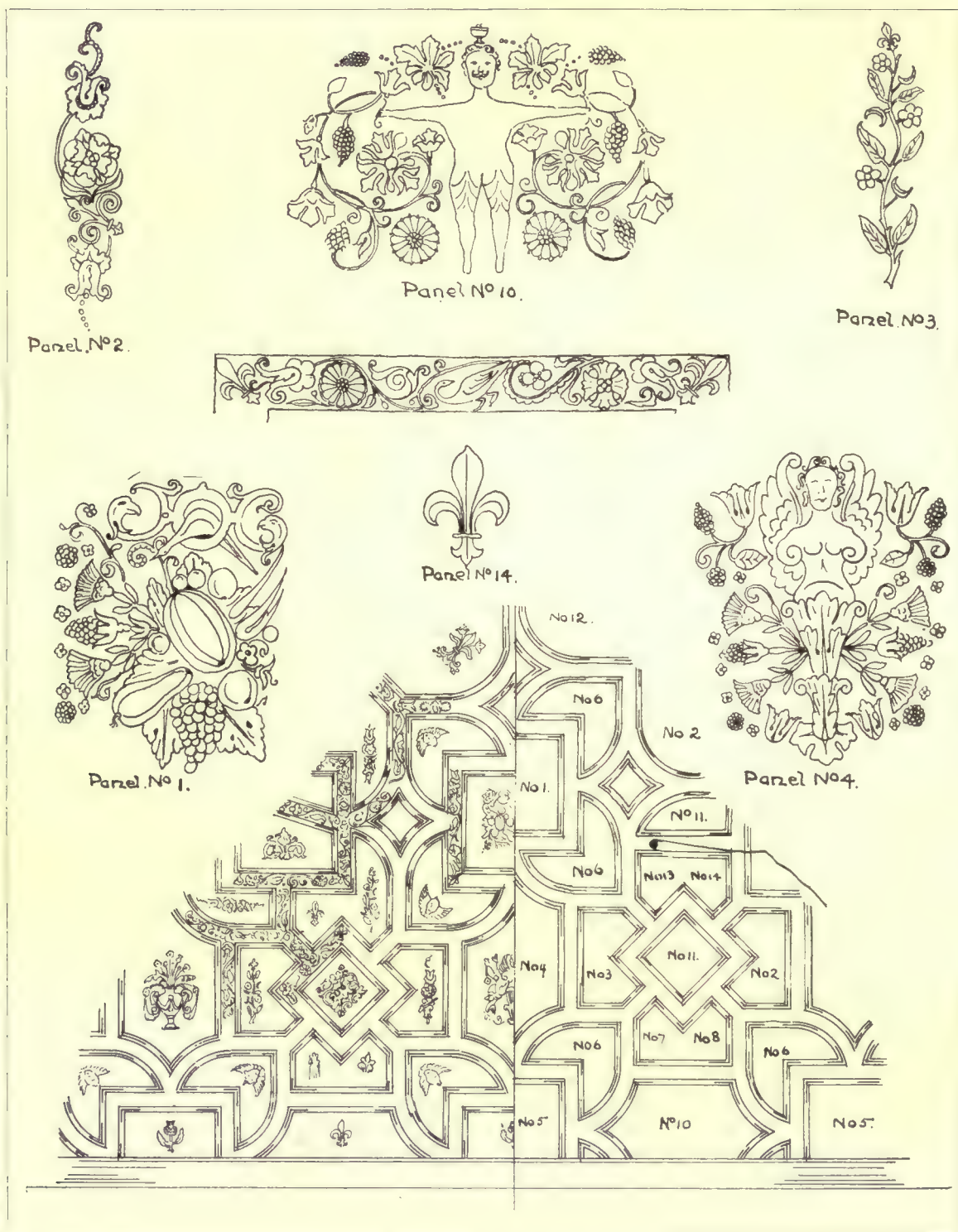


FIG. 302.—PART PLAN AND DETAILS OF FIG. 301 FROM MORAY HOUSE.





Panel No 12



Panel No. 5



Panel No 9.



Panel No 13



Panel No 8



Panel No 11



Panel No 8



Panel No 6

FIG. 302A.—Details of Fig. 302.



FIG. 303.—Moray House.

with similar ribs; and there is another on the same floor of ribbed circles, squares, and interlaced work (Fig. 298), and yet another in Fig. 299.

The type of modelling is similar throughout all these ceilings.

**CROFT-AN-RIGH (OR FIELD OF THE KING)** (early seventeenth century).—The ceiling, of later date than the house, is made up of moulded square panels, with the

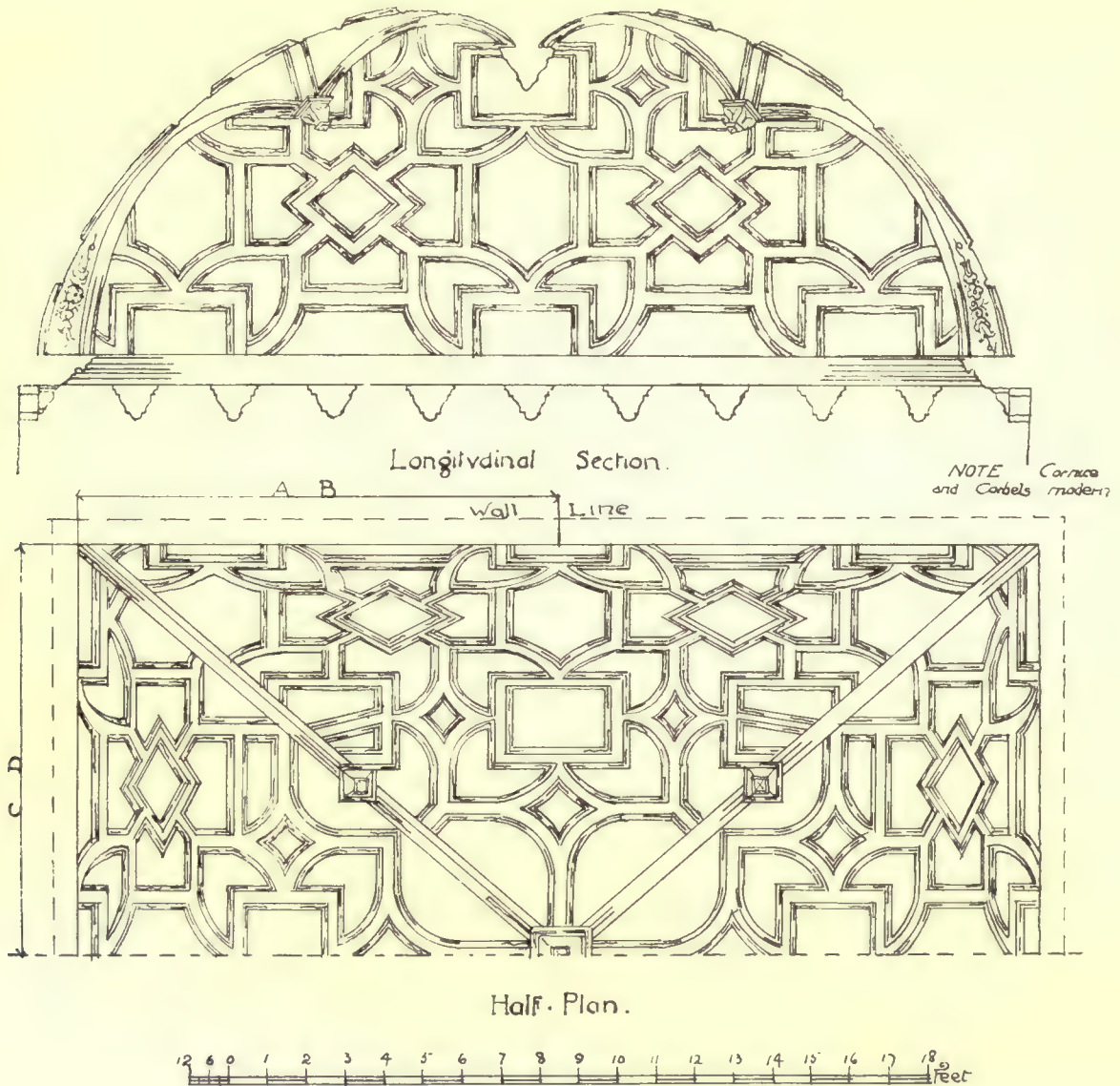


FIG. 304.—Plan and Section of Ceiling from Moray House.

corners rounded off. It contains smaller squares and circles, having the panels enriched with small bosses and mitre leaves at the intersections. This ceiling (Fig. 300) is similar, both in the setting of the panels and the enrichment, to the ceiling of Bailie Macmorran's House, Lawnmarket (Fig. 313).

**BINNS CASTLE, LINLITHGOW** (early seventeenth century).—There is some good plasterwork in this building. One ceiling made up of squares and circles by



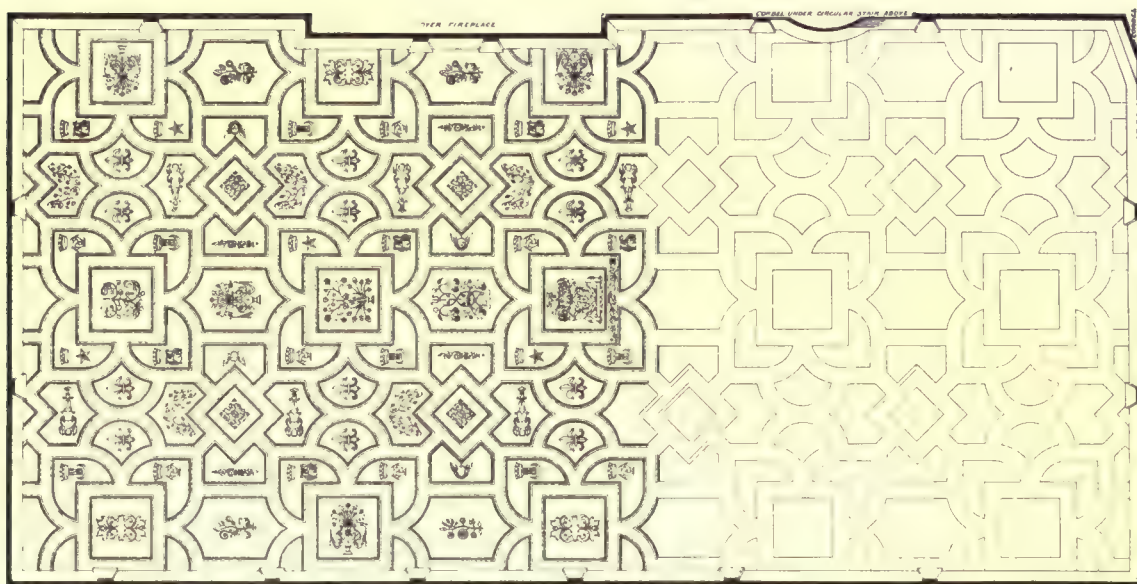


FIG. 305.—The Drawing-room Ceiling, Wintoun House, Haddingtonshire.

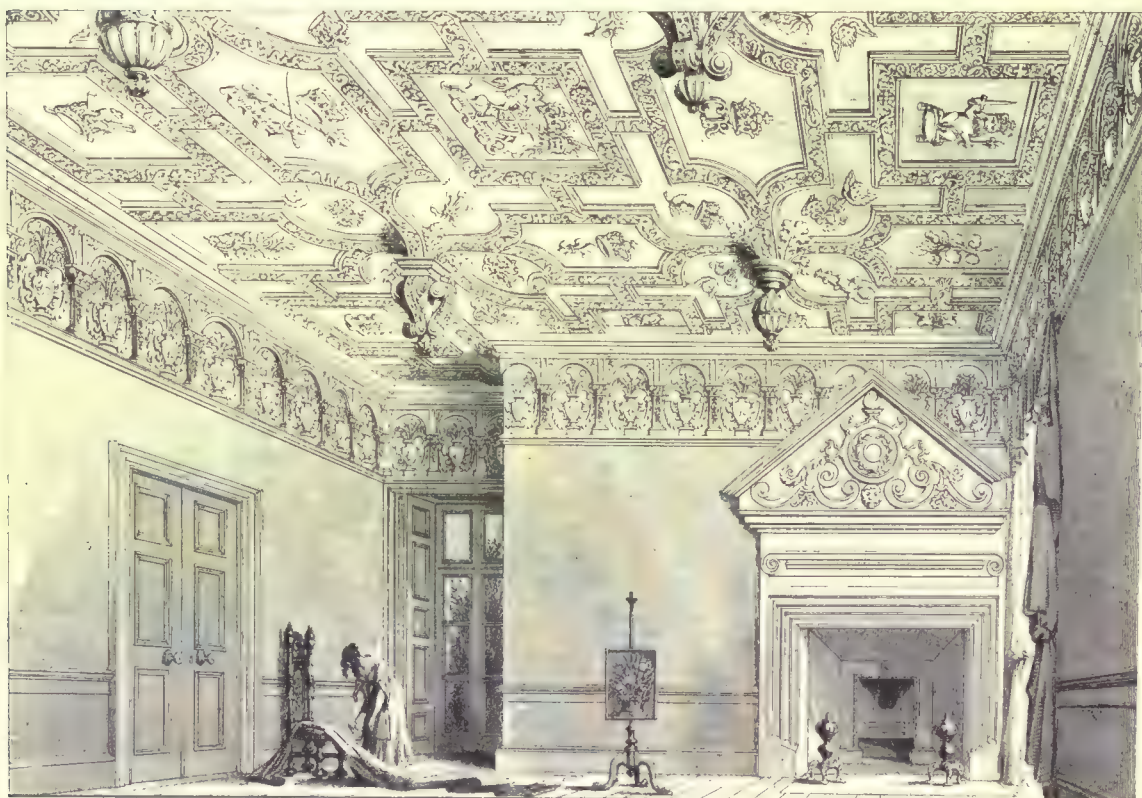


FIG. 307.—King Charles' Room, Wintoun House.

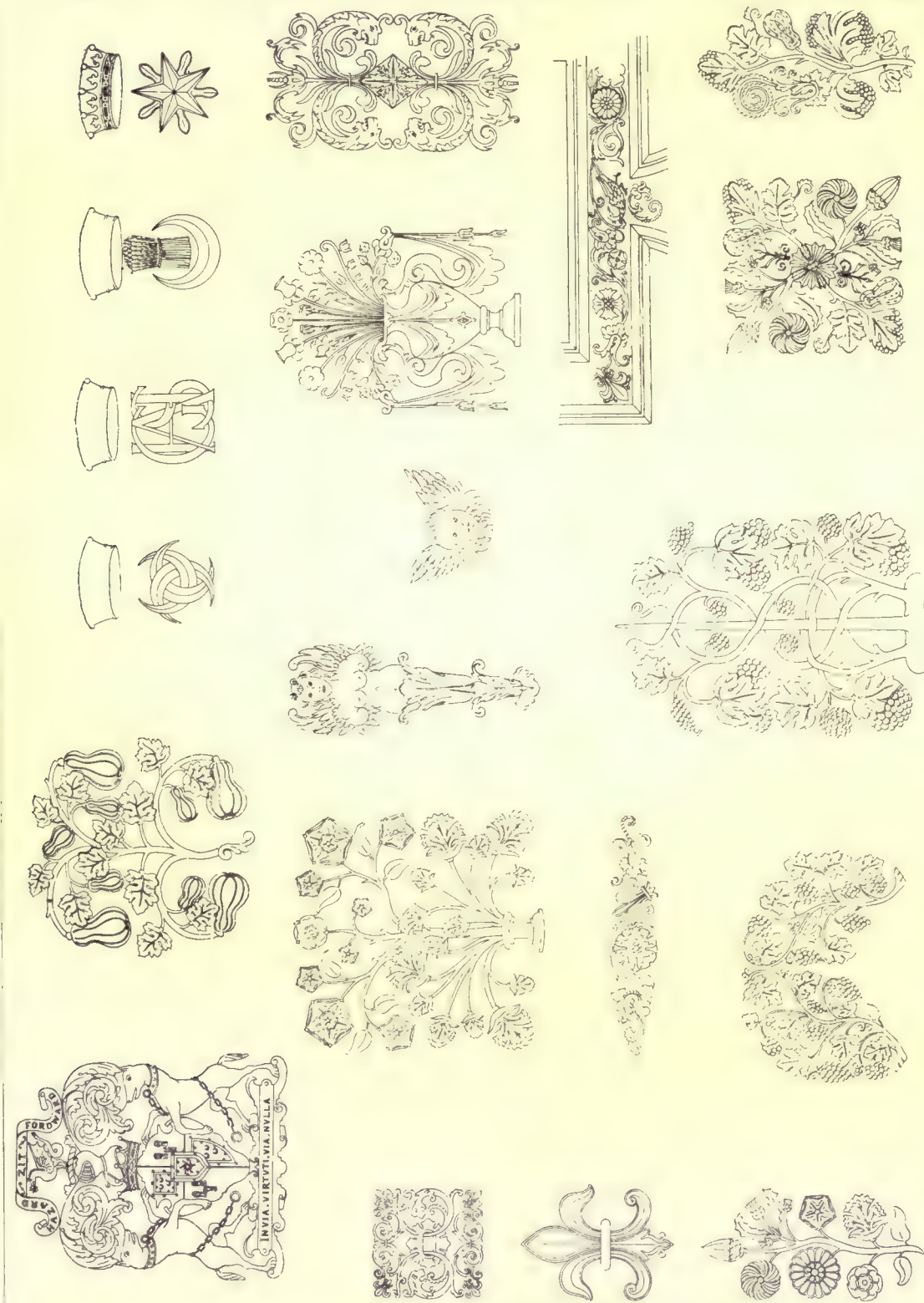


FIG. 306.—DRAWING-ROOM DETAILS, WINTOUN HOUSE.



plain narrow ribs, with enrichment of simple design, mostly in the form of monograms, stars, crescents, &c. Other ceilings have a heavier treatment of detail and relief. In one room is a deep frieze of foliage and fruit, in festoons.

Another ceiling is coved, the enriched ribs curving downward, and terminating in modelled pendants, very similar in manner to Moray House in its general treatment.



FIG. 308.—The Great Hall, Glamis Castle.

relief. The setting of the fruit, flowers, and leafage in some of the panels is most spirited, whilst, at the same time, the treatment of the figure work is grotesque and debased. A too heavy cornice carried on dummy corbels prevents this ceiling from being completely successful.

Another similar vaulted ceiling of earlier date has moulded groin ribs, but

At MORAY HOUSE, CANONGATE, EDINBURGH (so named after the "Good Regent Moray") (1618-28), is a unique vaulted ceiling to the first room, rectangular on the plan; the vault goes up into the roof space (Fig. 301). The modelling recalls the spirit and detail of that at Pinkie House, Binns Castle, and others of the same date. At Pinkie, however, the enriched bands have no mouldings enclosing them, whereas here at Moray House they have. (See detail, Figs. 302-304, of vault.)

The intersection of the vaults is marked by cusped, diagonal moulded ribs, each carrying a pendant with a longer central pendant. The panel enrichments are exceptionally vigorous and fine in design and modelling, and full of contrasting strength of



FIG. 309.—CEILING OF GLOBE ROOM, BALCASKIE HOUSE, FIFE SHIRE.



without the pendants, finishing at the top in a circular moulded rib of same section, with a saucer inside (Fig. 303).

Some of the same panel enrichments are used, and others are added. The cornice of this room is not so heavy or clumsy as the later example.

These two rooms were probably the dining and drawing rooms. The staircase has a ribbed and panelled saucer dome with the same panel enrichments, the ribs forming a pendant resting on the central newels.

WINTOUN HOUSE, OR CASTLE, PENCAITLAND, HADDINGTONSHIRE (about 1620).—The architect, William Wallace, King's Master-Mason of Scotland.



FIG. 310.—The Drawing-room Ceiling, Balcaskie House.

This house contains several very fine modelled ceilings. The drawing-room ceiling is the largest, and perhaps the best (Fig. 305).

The broad and enriched and moulded rib of varied pattern is similar in strength and design to those previously mentioned at Pinkie and Moray House, and probably made up from the same models and moulds, but worked into a different arrangement. The cornice is returned over the pilasters of the enriched frieze, forming small breaks which cut into the ceiling rib at haphazard. The panels are all fully enriched with delightfully modelled sprays of figs, vine, roses, pinks, thistles, squares, figures, and fleurs-de-lis, all of which have been used elsewhere (Fig. 306). This room has a very well-modelled frieze of fruit and swags, between pilasters, round which the cornice breaks, and a second frieze at a lower level over the chimney breast.

King Charles' Room has another ceiling of similar though less crowded design, the broad enriched ribs bearing down into scroll and beaded pendants—the panels bearing the Royal Arms, Prince's Feathers, and other insignia.

The frieze consists of arches and pilasters, with sprays of flowers in draped urns, apparently identical with those in the panels of the drawing-room ceiling (Fig. 307).

The bedrooms on the upper floor have been modernised, but the old panelled plaster ceilings are in many cases preserved.

GLAMIS CASTLE, FORFARSHIRE (1620).—Is rich in plaster ceilings.

The ceiling of the hall, 54 feet by 21 feet 6 inches, constructed by John, tenth



FIG. 311.—Ceiling of the Library, Balcaskie House.

Earl of Strathmore, contains his monogram and that of the Countess, and the date of its execution, 1620 (Fig. 308).

This room has a large semicircular barrel vault, panelled with radiating single moulded ribs, terminating centrally with large pendant as at Craigievar, and pendant bosses half-way down the sides of the vault. The panel enrichments are very similar to those at Craigievar, and the frieze and architrave treatment also much resembles the arrangement of this house. There is also a large chimney overmantel with two caryatides on each side, and a central panel bearing the Royal Arms. This ceiling is probably a few years earlier than the one at Craigievar.

The rooms of the first floor in the east wing were built at the same time





FIG. 312.—THE DINING-ROOM CEILING, BALCASKIE HOUSE.

(1620); the ceilings have the monograms of the tenth Earl and Countess on them.

BALCASKIE, FIFESHIRE.—This building has several peculiarly interesting plaster ceilings, particularly that of the "Globe Room" (Fig. 309).

A square room with, as usual, a simple moulded cornice; the ceiling springs off the cornice in a double break, somewhat after the manner of a "Mansard" roof, four-square wise, and down again in the centre; the ribs terminate in a belted globe, upon one of the belts of which is the Zodiac and other signs.

The ribs are a broad and happy combination of mouldings, with a central

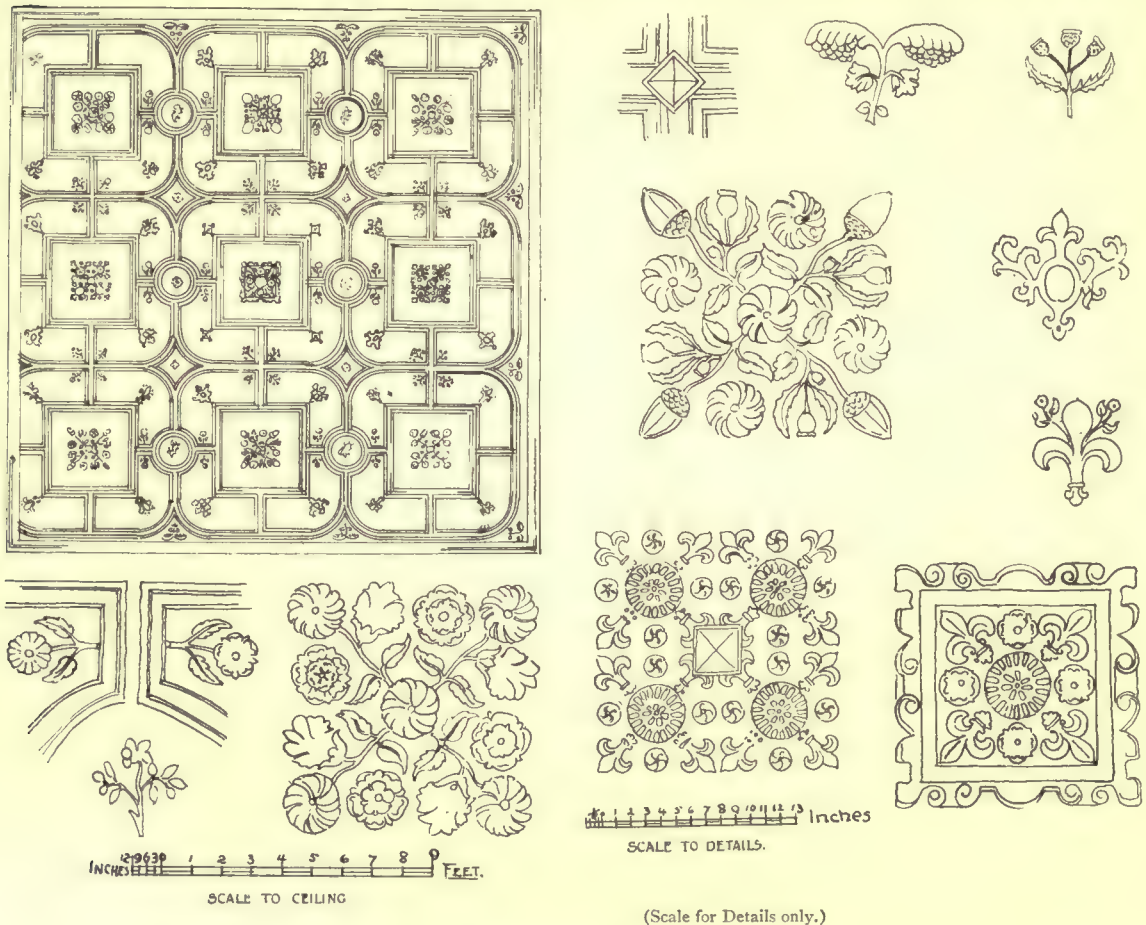


FIG. 313.—Bailie Macmorran's House, Lawnmarket.

enrichment, which round off and ease the angles. The enrichment combines the thistle and the rose, with leafage and scroll ornament in relief, of medium strength. The design of this ceiling is most original, and unlike any others we know of.

The drawing-room ceiling is of somewhat rather later date, showing more of the spirit of Inigo Jones's English work (Fig. 310).

The chief feature of this ceiling is a large oval of fruit, leafage, and berries, bounded on the inside and outside by soft, refined mouldings, of the same width as the other. The rest of the ceiling, outside the oval, is divided by broad, enriched, and moulded ribs into six rectangular panels and six square panels.



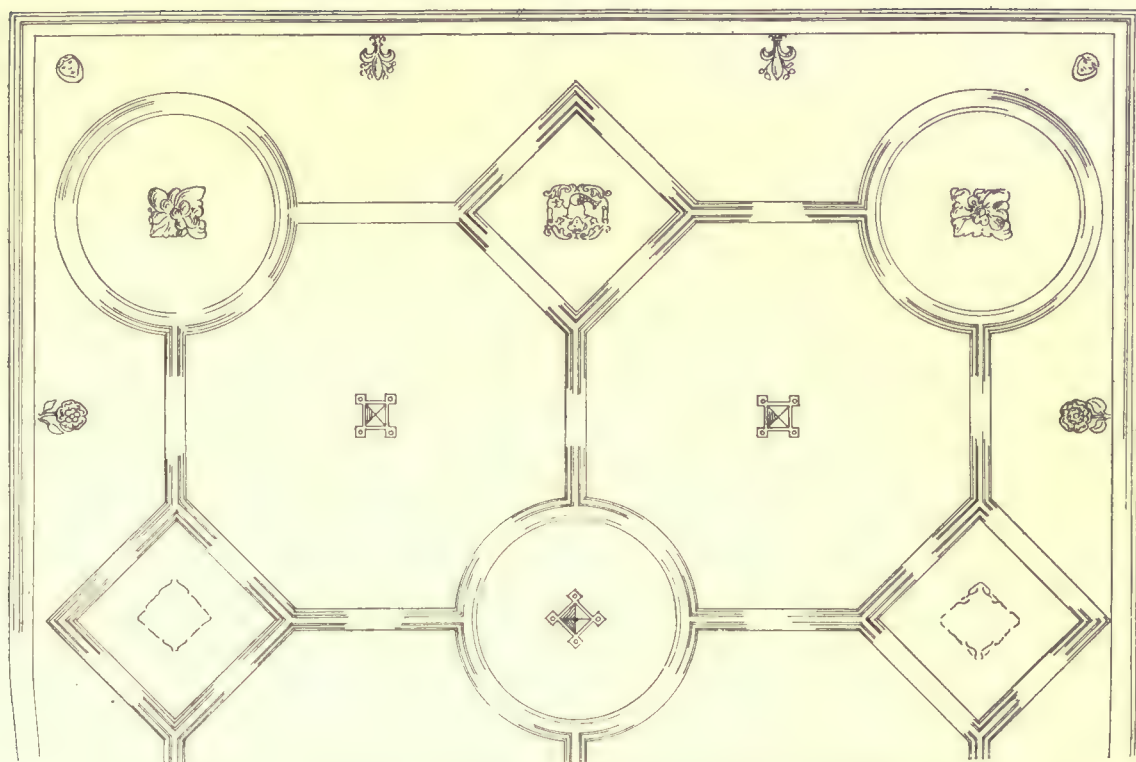


FIG. 314.—The French Ambassador's House, Cowgate, Edinburgh.

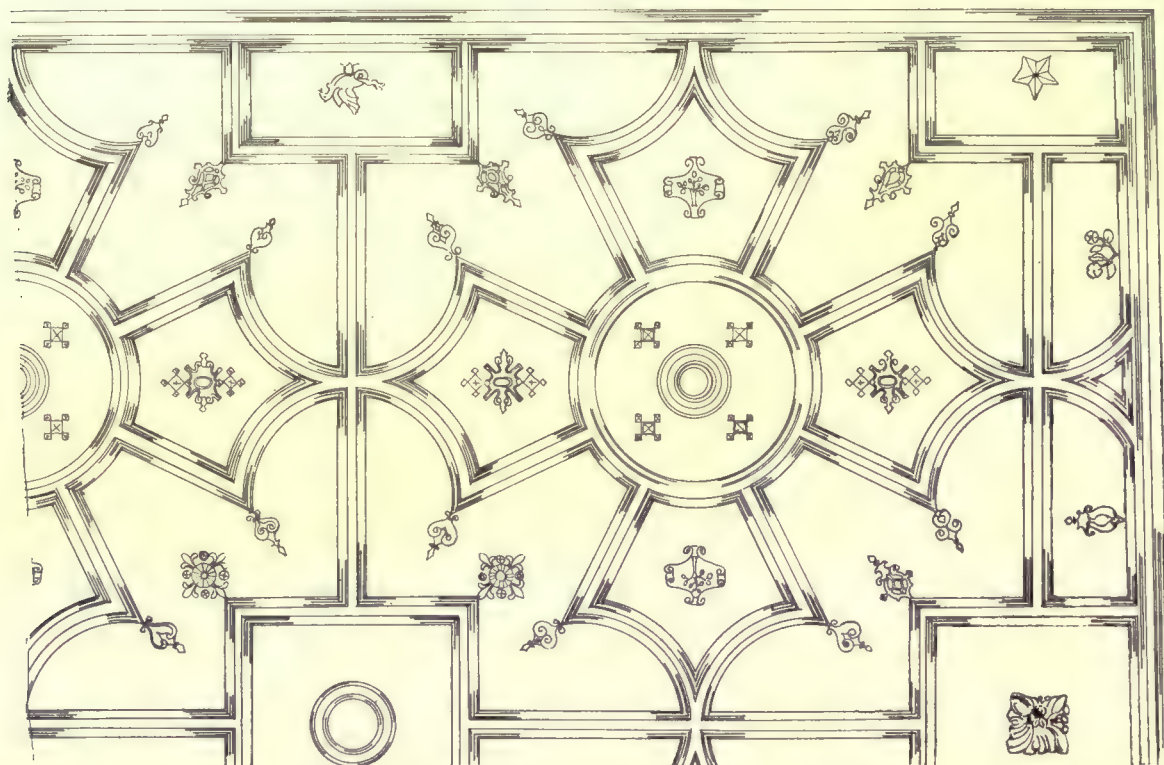


FIG. 315.—St Mary's Hall. Lawnmarket, Edinburgh.

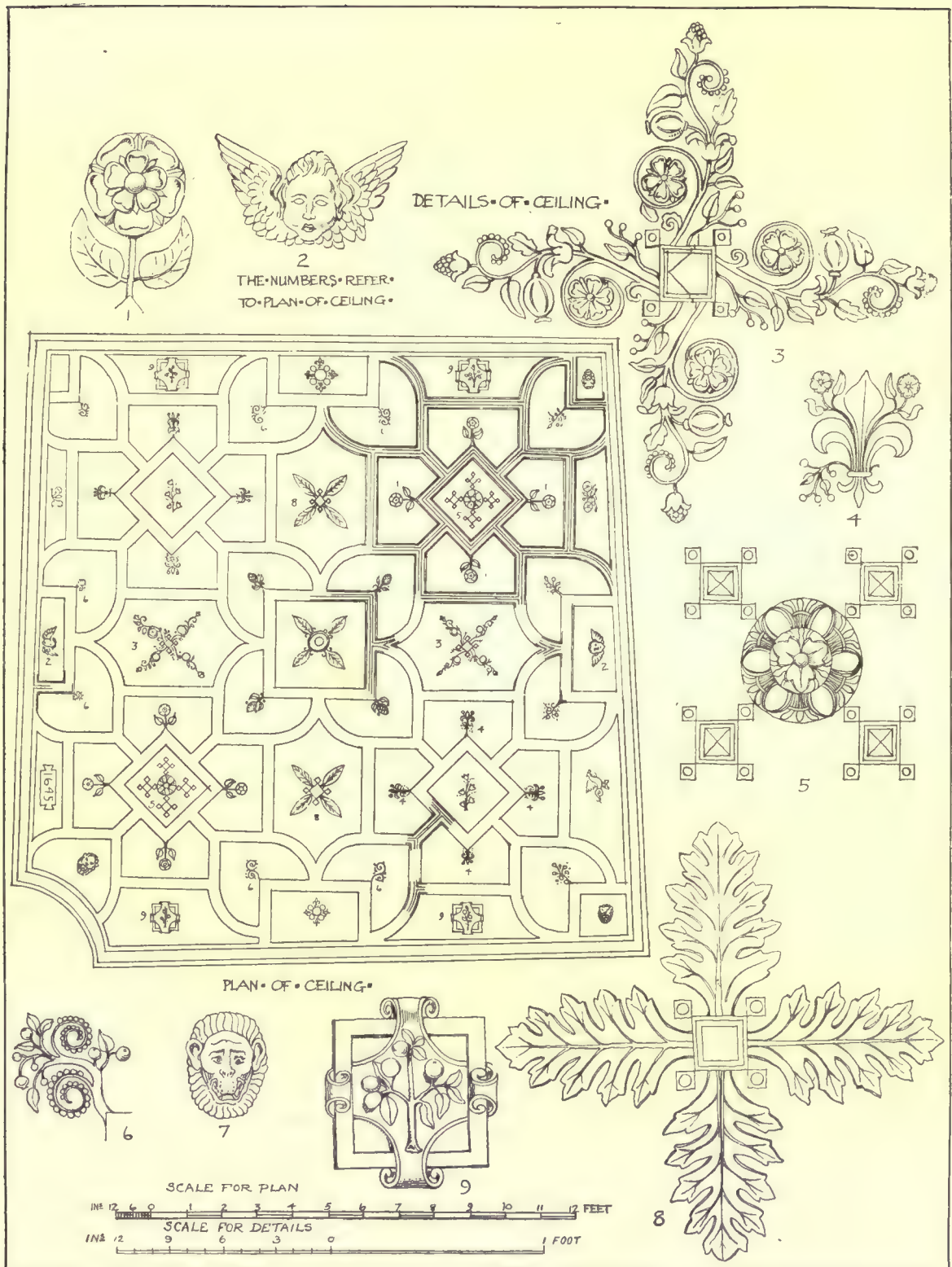


FIG. 315A.—ROMAN EAGLE HALL, EDINBURGH.



The former are decorated with fruit, winged heads, and swags hanging from strap-work, from which peep grotesque birds, bird's-head terminals, and lesser ornament. The square panels at the four corners hold circular pendants, whilst the two centre ones intersecting the oval are plain. This room has a modillioned cornice with other enrichments. The centre of the large oval has a lesser oval of laurel leafage and berries with clasps, and inside this lesser oval is a star-shaped pendant, terminating with bunches of grapes and vine leafage.

The enrichment of the large oval appears to have been cast in separate pieces worked up by hand into a soft groundwork. The ornament of the ribs and panels



FIG. 316.—Ceiling in Ninth Room, Holyrood Palace.

is often repeated, and was undoubtedly cast from moulds. The mouldings here and in the "Globe Room" were designed by kindred spirits.

*The Library* (Fig. 311).—A room nearly square on plan, has a ceiling of still later date, *c.* 1680, and shows more refinement and knowledge than those at Holyrood Palace of the same period. The ceiling is brought from the square into a diminishing series of five octagonal belts of enrichment, varying in width, contour, and relief. Between the first and second belts in the centre of each side of the octagon is a lesser octagonal panel, of smaller enrichments, with a large, whirling rosette, of flatly modelled acanthus-like leafage, with a centre of berries, whilst the irregular-shaped sunk spandrel spaces between the lesser octagons are occupied by a winged (female) half-figure, growing out of a spreading skirt of scrolled



FIG. 317.—CEILING IN SECOND ROOM, HOLYROOD PALACE.





FIG. 318.—CEILING IN FOURTH ROOM, HOLYROOD PALACE.

leafage, and rosettes filling the spaces, alternating with wreaths of bay leaves and berries and crossed palms. The third large octagonal belt is a deep cavetto moulding, between two lesser convex belts of guilloche and leaf enrichments; the cavetto holds free hanging swags, and drops of exquisitely modelled flowers, fruit, and leaves, tied with knots of ribbon. The detail of the outer moulding breaking up the guilloche is interesting in its original setting of vine-like leafage and berries.

The four spandrels are occupied by sunk panels containing sprayed wreaths of free oak treatment. A belt of oak leaves and acorns, in clusters, growing from a centre knot of ribbon, occupies the margin between cornice and octagon on the two sides beyond the square. The centre of ceiling within the innermost octagon is a large, circular sinking, with a painting, enclosed by a small beaded member.

*Dining-room Ceiling* (Fig. 312).—The treatment is broader and simpler here than in the library. The

square ceiling space within a plain simply moulded cornice is occupied by a large octagon of vigorously modelled clusters of flowers, leaves, and berries in fairly full relief, alternately held in a wide belt of somewhat shallow hollow members between two wide bands of plain, softly grouped, mouldings of somewhat earlier detail. The central flower clustered on each side of the main octagon is brought down into the irregular pendant form, terminating in a many petalled form like a sunflower.

The painted sunk panel

enclosed by the main octagon is at a higher level than the main surface of the surrounding ceiling. In the place of the eight lesser octagons of the library ceiling, in the four sides parallel with the walls, there are large whirling rosettes of broad painted leafage with bossed centres, whilst on the four other sides are large wreaths of laurel leaves and berries of semicircular section enclosing a somewhat coarsely modelled rosette. A ribbon flows from each side of the wreaths filling the spandrel panels which are bounded by mouldings parallel with the walls, octagons, and whirling rosettes.

The work thus described would be somewhat earlier than that of the library ceiling.

ROSSLYN CASTLE, MIDLOTHIAN (1622).—The dining-room ceiling is square on plan, divided into nine panels by plaster beams square on section, the sides of which are enriched with a running ornament of conventional rose pattern. Each



FIG. 319.—A Portion of the Staircase Ceiling, Holyrood Palace.



panel is again divided into four panels by a narrow flat band of enrichment, connected at the crossing by circular plaques bearing grotesque figures. The centre panel has a rectangular plate bearing the armorial shield, and crest, of Sir William Edmonston, and the date 1622. In the corner of each of the minor square panels of this ceiling there are sprigs of flowers growing out of baskets or fleurs-de-lis.

The main moulded cornice is intersected by the enriched beams, but does not mitre with them.

LINLITHGOW (1625).—Waldie, in his "History of Linlithgow," mentions the Town House (built by the father of the man who owned Bonhard), in which were some fine stucco ceilings of Charles First period, or thereabouts. In one of these ceilings there is said to have been a mask of Alexander Cornwall, a member of the family supposed to have been killed on Flodden Field.

(It is not unusual to find masks of Alexander the Great, and other ancient heroes, modelled on ceiling panels, but masks of Alexander Cornwall are rare.)

MUCHALLS HOUSE (1627).—The hall and withdrawing-room on the first floor have ceilings ornamented with plain moulded ribs, the panels being filled with representations of Roman emperors, classic heroes, and Scripture characters.

MIDMAR CASTLE, ABERDEENSHIRE (time James IV.).—Many of the rooms have plaster ceilings, ornamented with moulded ribs, and enriched panels.

BAILIE MACMORRAN'S HOUSE, RIDDLE'S CLOSE, LAWNMARKET, EDINBURGH (1630-38).—This magistrate's house contains some interesting plaster-work. A square room in this house



FIG. 320.—Queen Victoria's Bedroom, Holyrood Palace.

has the ceiling area inside the cornice, divided into nine squares, with *double* moulded ribs at the angles. Each of the nine squares contains a smaller square, with mitred angles, from which spring fleurs-de-lis. There are also six small intervening circular panels—each panel containing square enrichments of similar character to those at Pinkie above described, but different in detail and arrangement. There are also subordinate sprigs and sprays delightfully quaint in their setting, and thoroughly Scottish in character (Fig. 313).

THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S HOUSE, COWGATE, EDINBURGH.—Contains a small square ceiling simply arranged with circles and squares of double mouldings,

arranged alternately, and connected square-wise by short bands with small and modest ornament occupying the panels—and sprigs growing off the cornice (Fig. 314).

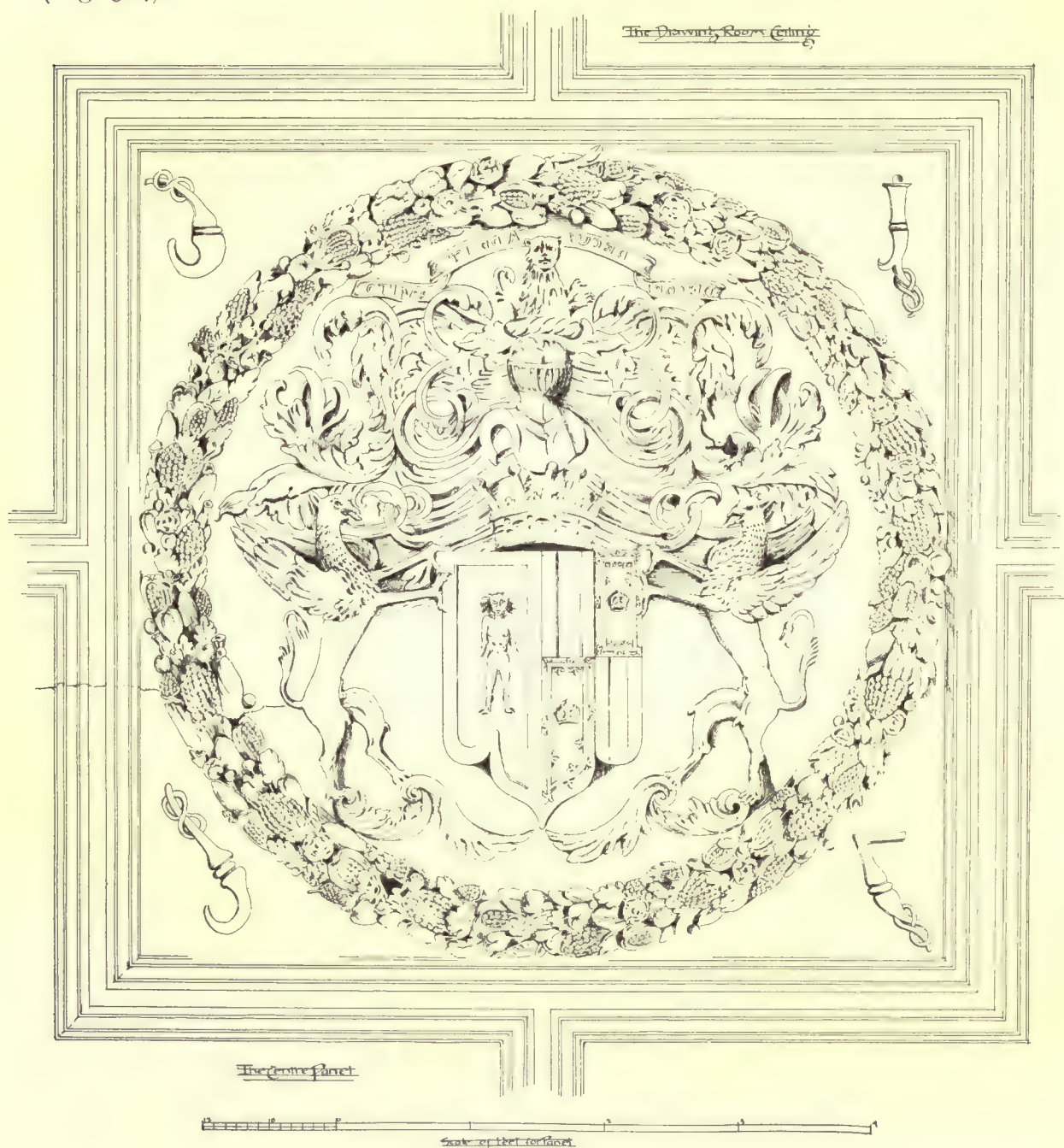


FIG. 321.—Portion of Drawing-room Ceiling, Kellie Castle, Fifeshire.

LETHINGTON CASTLE, HADDINGTONSHIRE (1632).—A room in the south side of the second floor has a ceiling, in a bad state, of single moulded ribs, set into squares, with stars radiating from pendants, and leafage covering the intersections.



Winged heads fill most of the irregular panels, and the monogram L.M.S. frequently repeated in the square panels is combined with the earl's coronet. The date on the three panelled chimney-overmantels, done also in plaster, is 1632, whilst the arms in the centre panel are dated 1618. The cornice is composed of simple mouldings run solid in plaster. The height of this room is 8 feet 11 inches.

CARNOCK CASTLE, STIRLINGSHIRE (1634).—Contains some fine plaster ceilings similar to those of Pinkie House, Moray House, or Whitbourne. The dining and drawing rooms are, perhaps, the best examples, and are made up of square, circular, and rectangular panels, curved at the ends. The ribs are of single mouldings, with terminal angle sprays of thistles and roses, and the circular panels are filled with moulded pendants, with a base of radiating leafage, and clustered leafage clinging round the end of the pendants.

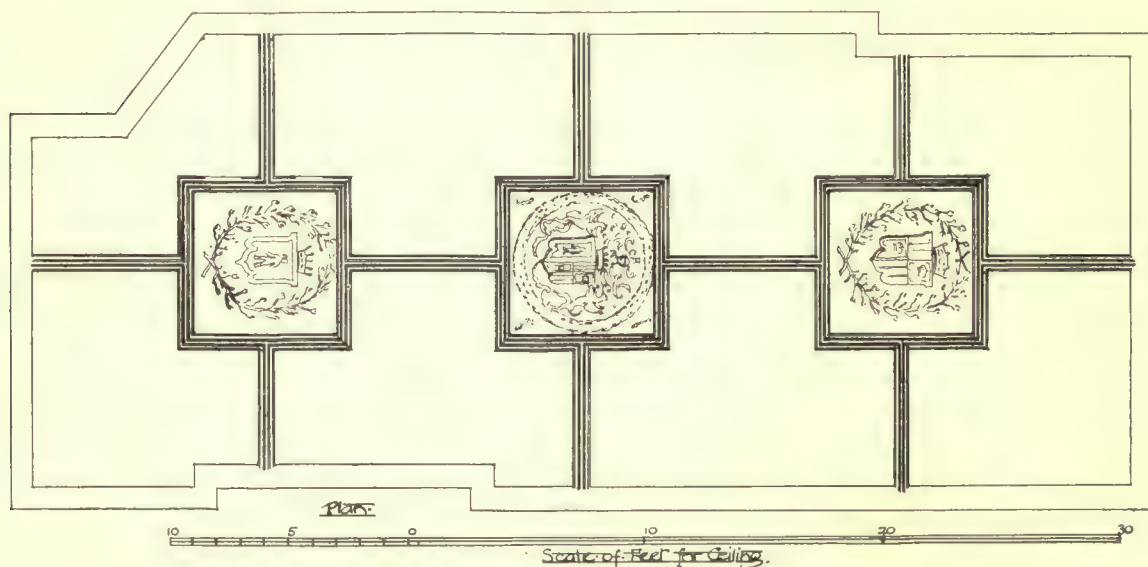


FIG. 322.—General View of Drawing-room Ceiling, Kellie Castle.

In other examples, the enrichments are in the main repetitions, depending for novelty on the details of the design.

ST MARY'S HALL (formerly called the Roman Eagle Hall), BRODIE'S CLOSE, LAWNMARKET, EDINBURGH (1645-46).—Contains a ceiling originally belonging to two rooms of different pattern. The rooms were of irregular shape, and the ceilings set out in squares with single moulded ribs, circular and radiating pentagonal panels, containing sprays, sprigs, fleurs-de-lis, stars, cartouches, pyramids, small figures, winged heads, and wyverns, with leafage radiating angle-wise from pyramids and circles, or from rings of flat mouldings (see Figs. 315 and 315A).

HATTON HOUSE, MIDLOTHIAN (1664-75).—Has fine ceilings in two rooms at the south-west corner of the building, the chief feature of which is a large centre oval partly filled with festoons of fruit and foliage, modelled in high, sharp relief (the surrounding work of high relief also), while the centre is left for painting. The modelling of this work is similar in feeling to the stucco festooned work at Holyrood Palace.

SAUGHTON HOUSE (1670).—Has enriched plaster ceilings of similar type and date to those at Holyrood Palace.

HOLYROOD PALACE (1670) (Figs. 316-320).—The suite of private royal apartments contains some fine examples of stucco-duro. They are said to have been executed by a party of "gentlemen-modellers" who were honoured by being allowed to wear the sword and frill of the period whilst at work. The story may, or may not, be true as it stands, but it seems to be certain that these amateurs were Italians possessed of no little skill in the working of stucco-duro, and examination of the modelling shows that the most of their work was modelled direct. It was the custom of the Italians to work lying on their backs on the scaffolding, and to protect their eyes against injury from the dropping of any stuff by wearing glass goggles. There is not much doubt that portions of the small work were cast, but the bulk of the enrichment was modelled leaf by leaf, and flower by flower, and nothing of any importance has its double amongst these details.

The delicacy of the technique is most beautiful, and will bear the minutest scrutiny. The leafage is thin, close lying, crisp, sharp, well set on its groundwork, holding an ample amount of black shadow, and half tone; and only from perfect material could such results have been obtained. Fig. 289 gives some of the moulding sections and details of enrichment.

In the construction of stems and branches, it was usual to make use of short pieces of stick, wire, lead piping, fibre; anything of the kind that would enable the modeller to twist and twine his branches, giving stiffness and thinness to his stem work and projection to the berries, and the petalled heads of his flowers—enabling him also to stiffen and support the hanging of the swags downwards from the belts of main enrichment, to volute and spiral his long-drawn tobacco leafage, and to throw into complete isolation, from the ceiling background, any part of the work so designed, without fear of damage, since security from that was ensured by the toughness, hardness, and tenacity of a plaster which could be regulated so as to set either slowly or quickly.

It became the custom of the Scotch at one period to partly cast, and partly model. It combined economy of time and cost with freedom of execution, and some extremely interesting examples of the results of mixing are in the Queen's Bedroom (Fig. 320), as also at Kellie Castle (Fig. 323). The main lines of the ceiling were set out, and the moulding worked, or run, as the case required. The fruit and

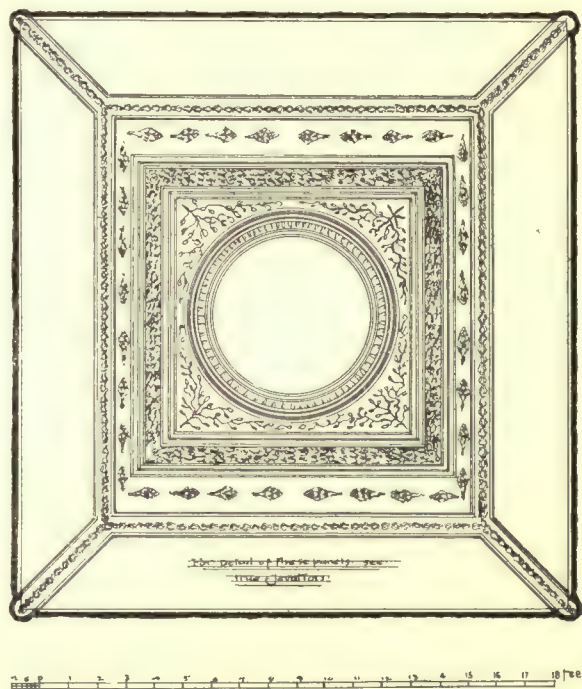


FIG. 323.—Plan of Ceiling in Vine Room, Kellie Castle.



leafage, modelled and cast in separate pieces, was sorted according to size, and brought on to the scaffolding in baskets. The spreading and branching was drawn on the surface of ceiling or panel, the branches and stems modelled, and the leafage, which had been cast, stuck up wherever required. Many of the wreaths, circles, and rosettes were made up in this manner, as also some of the main belts of the heavier type of fruit and leaf work.

In the better work, the mark and stroke of the metal tool are unmistakable, and the fingers were also used freely in the modulation of detail.

KELLIE CASTLE, FIFESHIRE (1573).—Contains some excellent and very refined

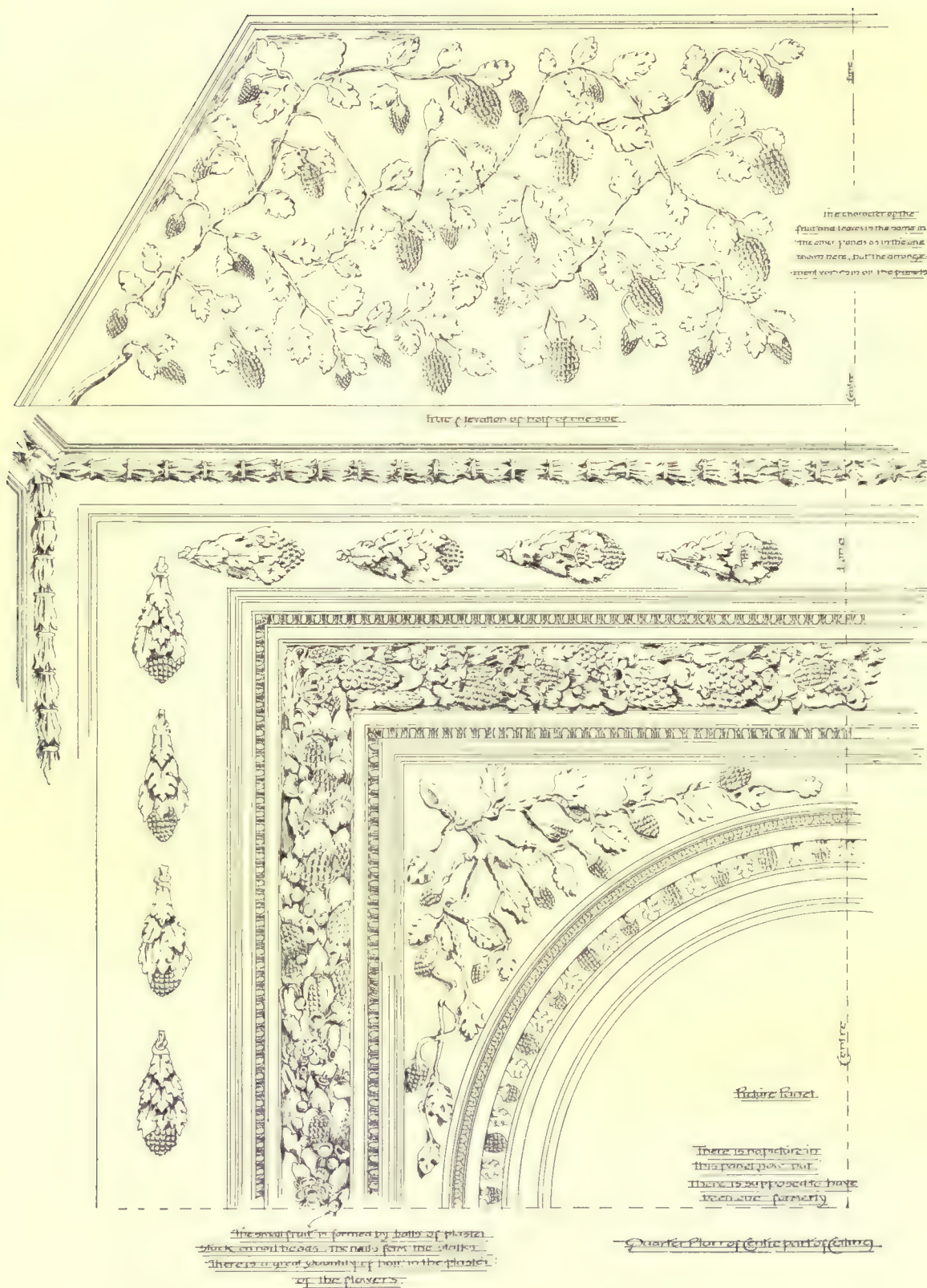


FIG. 324.—Ceiling of Vine Room, Kellie Castle.

plaster ceilings of two distinct periods. The great drawing-room has a large coach roof ceiling (Figs. 321, 322).

*The Vine Room* (Fig. 323) has a very fine ceiling springing from a modillioned cornice with deep sloping sides richly modelled with a branching vine; the stem-work modelled, while the fruit and leafage is cast and applied to the ceiling surface. Inside these sloping sides are bands of richly modelled fruit and leafage bounded by mouldings. Within the square of these bands is a deeply moulded circle, with grapes and leaves planted alternately. The plain portion inside this moulded circular panel is flat. A most excellent example of Scottish plasterwork of this period (Figs. 324, 325).

*The Earl's Bedroom* has a ceiling with similar sloping sides, decorated at the



SCALE OF 12 9 6 3 0 1 2 3 4 5 FEET

FIG. 325.—DETAIL OF CEILING IN VINE ROOM, KELLIE CASTLE.



centre of each side with a wreath of olive leaves and fruit, enclosing winged heads—the angles have sprays of thistle and rose growing out of an urn (Fig. 326).

The flat portion of the ceiling contains a moulded panel enclosing a similar olive wreath with a shield and armorial bearings, and angle sprays as before described.

*The Library Ceiling* is divided into square and circular panels by an enriched and moulded rib, the enrichment being based on the strap or fret.



FIG. 326.—The Earl's Bedroom, Kellie Castle.

The square and circular panels are ornamented with heads of kings and lions; the remaining panels with an acanthus-like pattern; the ceiling is dated, 1617.

The cornice is moulded, and there is a space of 12 inches between the bottom of the cornice and the panelling, which was probably occupied by a frieze (see Fig. 327).

**DRUMLANRIG CASTLE, DUMFRIESSHIRE (1676-88).**—One of the finest of the Scottish seventeenth-century mansions, contains some excellent plaster ceilings. The dining-room, 50 feet by 23 feet 4 inches, has a ceiling enriched with plaster

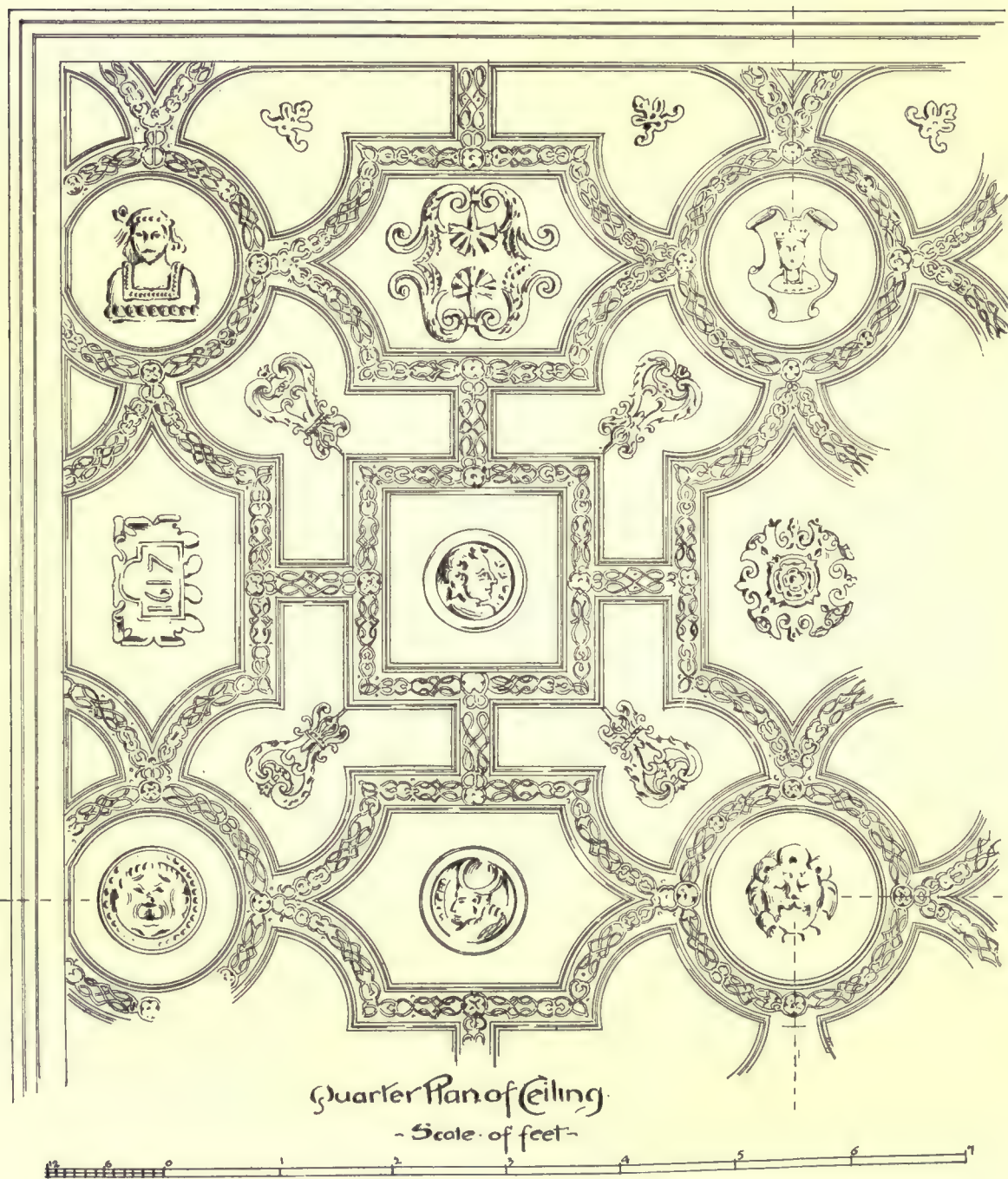


FIG. 327.—The Library, Kellie Castle.

panels (square and quatrefoil), by ornamented moulded ribs. The drawing-room, immediately over the dining-room, has a ceiling similar in design. In the morning room the panels of the ceiling are heart-shaped, probably in allusion to the Douglas arms, which also are panelled: rectangular, quatrefoil, and circular.



One room on the west side has a groined and ribbed vault enriched with the marquis's coronet and monograms on the central boss. Everything here seems to point to the Scottish origin of the whole work.

CAROLINE PARK (formerly Royston), GRANTON, MIDLOTHIAN (1685).—Has a suite of rooms on the west side of the house with ceilings panelled, and richly decorated with modelled ornament of a particularly fine character.



FIG. 328.—Caroline Park.

one large enriched and moulded panel, with semicircular corners containing rosettes, and a panel formed by lesser mouldings inside the larger panel. At one end of the room is a service recess divided from the main room by three arches, which has a panelled ceiling, with a rosette on each panel. The cornice, a bracketed one, runs the whole length of the room.

decorated with modelled ornament of a particularly fine character. The flowers and other enrichments are all finely modelled, and the panels contain paintings, signed N. Hevde, Inventor.

One room on the first floor has a coved ceiling with a broad modelled leaf covering each angle of the cove immediately above the wood panelling (Fig. 328). Portion of another ceiling shown in Fig. 329.

DRUM HOUSE, MIDLOTHIAN (by William Adam of Maryburgh, father of R. and J. Adam) (late seventeenth century).—The dining-room has a coved ceiling, the cove checkered with diamond-shaped rosettes, which have leaf-covered corners, with cartouches at the centres of the sides and ends.

The ceiling has



FIG. 329.—Caroline Park.

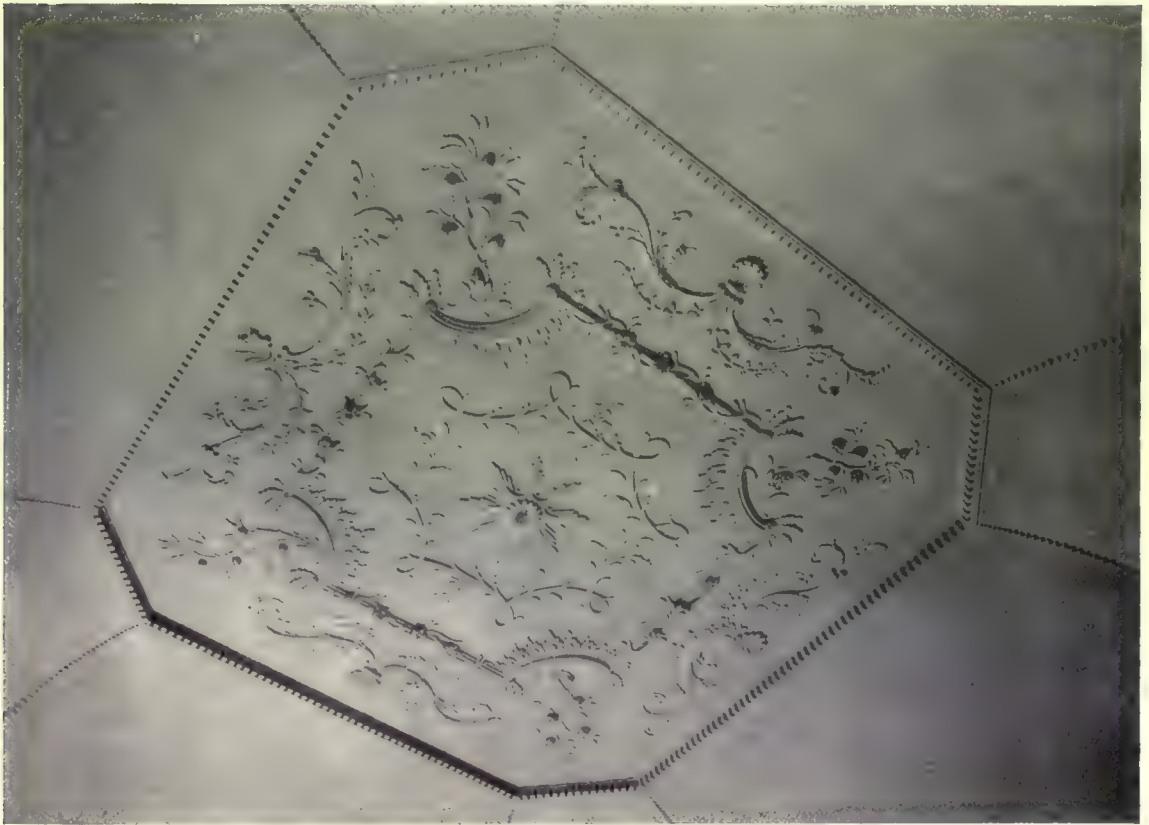


FIG. 330.—Minto House, Roxburghshire.



The drawing-room, 36 feet  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 18 feet  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, has a coved ceiling with enriched and bracketed cornice, and cartouches on same at the centre of the sides. There are also sprays of leaves and berries, tied with ribbon at the ends, and on each side of the cartouches.

The ceiling is divided into three square panels, moulded and enriched by a modelled band.

MINTO HOUSE, ROXBURGHSHIRE (1740-45).—The drawing-room has a coved ceiling, the centre part of which is brought to an irregular octagon by a dentiled moulding. The mitres of the cove are enriched with a small beaded line. The centre of the ceiling is modelled in the French style of the eighteenth century, with scrolls and bars, foliage, and sprays of fruit (Fig. 330).

DALZELL CASTLE, LANARKSHIRE (two miles from Motherwell), the residence of Lord Hamilton.—The whole of the first floor of the south wing of this building has been modernised.

"It has a drawing-room and ante-drawing-room, with very elaborate plaster ceilings, wholly the work of the late Mr R. W. Billings, and done by his own hands—most of the new ornamental work in stone and plaster was executed by him personally."—*Macgibbon and Ross*.



FIG. 330A.—Panel of Ceiling in Fourth Room, Holyrood Palace.

## CHAPTER IX.

## IRISH PLASTERWORK.

PLASTERWORK now remaining in Ireland, and more particularly in Dublin, seems to be traceable only so far back as about 1740.

At that time it was not an uncommon practice to employ great architects like Sir Christopher Wren, or Sir William Chambers, to prepare sketch designs or drawings (possibly without even visiting the site) for public buildings of importance, which would be entrusted to the superintendence of other architects, or even to the care and tender mercies of a clerk of works, to adapt, develop, detail, and alter as he thought fit. The carvers and plasterers were finally brought in to decorate the ceilings and walls of such buildings. These men at least had the advantage and merit of having had previous employment in the decoration of buildings in England, or the Continent. The work was similar in kind to that which was being done in England at the same time.

With the exception of some remains of Elizabethan plaster in an old house at Tipperary, and the Gibbons and Wren work at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin (Fig. 331), there are no examples of Irish work which were not of the eighteenth century, and to be found in Dublin. The later and most interesting work can all be traced to the colony of foreign plasterers imported from Italy by Lord Portarlington. Whatever genius for design and the handling of plaster has survived to the present day belonged originally to those Italians, and is traceable still in their names. There are scattered examples of Italian work out of Dublin in towns such as Waterford, Cork, and others which can be seen in the houses of county families, such as the Lord Portarlington's seat, but it is all in the Dublin style, and these exceptions will prove the rule.

There is a story about a ceiling in Waterford Cathedral (1770), which is told by the late Sir Thomas Drew, who was told by an old inhabitant that his grandfather assisted the little foreign gentlemen who made the ceiling with their thumbs and little tools, while lying on their backs on the scaffold, wearing glass spectacles to protect their eyes from the dropping stuff.

Among houses containing plasterwork of this description may be mentioned Carton, Maynooth, the residence of the Duke of Leinster; Powerscourt; Castletown House, Celbridge, the residence of Mr Connolly; Russboro', the residence of the Earl of Milltown, in the neighbourhood of Dublin; Baronscourt, the residence of the Duke of Abercorn; Ballyfin, built by Charles Coote, in the Queen's County. Many county Dublin mansions have also the plasterwork of the Italian workers, who also introduced the beautiful inlay in coloured cements in mantelpieces and tables. The most important of the Irish residences were built towards the close of the eighteenth century, under the influence of an architect of the name of Cassels, but we are unable to give the exact dates of many examples.





FIG. 331.—THE ROYAL HOSPITAL, KILMAINHAM, DUBLIN.





FIG. 332.—PORTION OF CENTRE AND SIDE PANELS, ROYAL HOSPITAL, KILMAINHAM, DUBLIN.



THE ROYAL HOSPITAL, DUBLIN (Fig. 331), was commenced towards the close of the seventeenth century, and it has been ascertained that Sir Christopher Wren was responsible for its design, although he did not superintend its execution. The ceiling of the chapel, executed in 1680, appears to be the only example of plaster-work in Dublin in which Wren was chiefly concerned. The work, which is full of deeply undercut, naturally treated flowers, fruit, and foliage, betrays the influence of Grinling Gibbons and Cibber.

This long rectangular-shaped ceiling is deeply coved on each side—springing from a wide flat soffit. The cove is richly panelled by highly ornamented sunk mouldings, the stiles of the panels being enriched with a similar band of vigorously modelled and deeply undercut fruit and flowers (Fig. 332).

Similar transverse ribs divide the flat portion of the ceiling into a square compartment at each end, a rectangular compartment in the centre, and two narrow rectangular panels between.

These are filled with a cartouche in the centre from which flow scrolls of acanthus leafage. This work is more deeply undercut, and is more rococo in spirit than that of the same period in England (Fig. 333).

The two square compartments (Fig. 331), which are sunk by means of enriched mouldings, contain large circular wreaths of swags and drops, of flowers, fruit, and ribbons, which hang clear round an inner limiting moulding, and are therefore in full relief.

The spandrels are occupied with crossed palm and laurel sprays in lower relief.

The centre compartment (Fig. 334) contains a sunk panel; a rectangle with canted corners, the sides at the centres breaking into a flat segment; it is enclosed by a moulded rib, whose soffit is heavily enriched in a similar manner to the cross ribs. Cross sprays of oak and laurel occupy the spandrels which mark out the shape of the rectangular compartment.

On the mitres of the soffit of the transverse and longitudinal ribs are cherub heads with spread wings in full relief (Fig. 333).

The illustrations are taken from photographs of the present ceiling reconstructed from the original ceiling by Messrs Jackson & Son. It should be noted that in the original ceiling blackthorn twigs were used in the stem work, and that in the course of time they perished, to the detriment of the ceiling.

DUBLIN CASTLE (1740).—The main character of the plasterwork in the small reception room, so far as the cove is concerned, is in accordance with the freer forms of the early eighteenth-century manner of working.

The ceiling has flat ornamental ribs forming panels, some of which are enriched, and others plain; this work has the seventeenth-century Palladian character which Sir William Chambers struggled to maintain against the intrusion of the rococo spirit. The birds and trophies, however, show traces of this influence.

There is another example in a building close to what were once the state apartments, which shows the influence of the early eighteenth century. The relief is fairly strong—the rococo detail shows only a modest development—with swags and drops. This work is undoubtedly executed *in situ*, with the thumb and a free hand.

At LEINSTER HOUSE (date about 1745) is some good plaster decoration of the

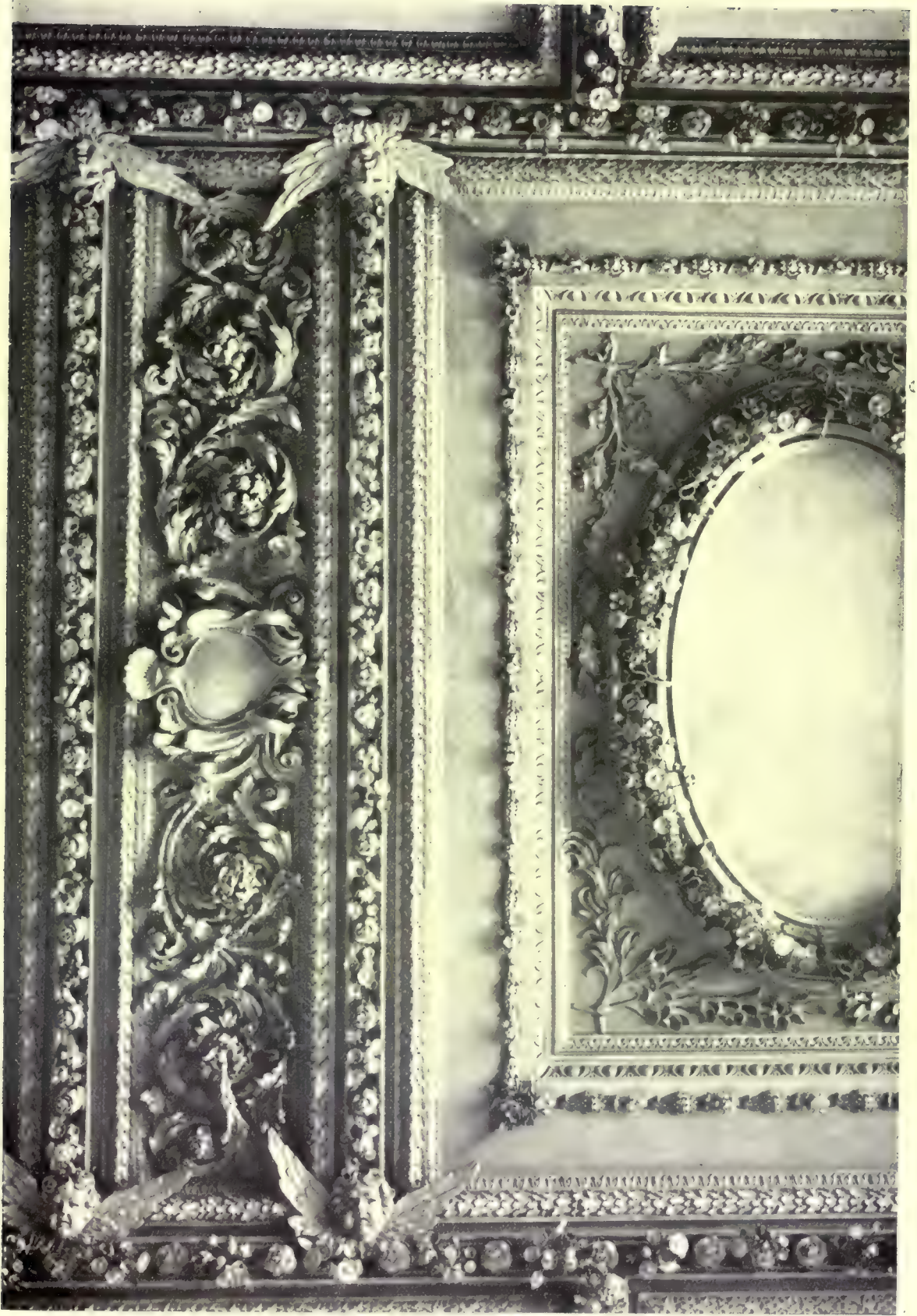


FIG. 313.—BAND AND PORTION OF OVAL PANEL, ROYAL HOSPITAL, KILMAINHAM, DUBLIN.





FIG. 334.—CENTRE PORTION, ROYAL HOSPITAL, KILMAINHAM, DUBLIN.

typical Irish kind. The duke's private room shows an extremely interesting variation of the acanthus used ornamentally. The staircase has some good wall decoration, showing a little of the rococo spirit in the narrow panels between the three larger ones intended to frame-in the family portraits.

**ROTUNDA HOSPITAL** (1751-55).—It is not difficult to recognise the same workmanship in the ceiling of the staircase, although the rococo influence is less evident than at Leinster House.

The rococo style of Louis XV. was at this time very popular on the Continent.

In the chapel of the Rotunda the rococo influence is still more remarkable. The cove is probably the work of another hand, later in date, and that of a worker in touch with the Continental work of the time. This building was designed by Ensor.

**CHARLEMONT HOUSE** was built by Sir William Chambers in 1763, but the plasterwork does not suggest his design. It is curious to notice here how the enriched architraves of some of the internal doorways are carried up into scrolled pediments ending in volutes holding masks or heads between, with swags lopping from the volutes, in crude imitation of Louis XIV. work.

The dome of the board room is quite different in feeling, the frieze being strongly suggestive of Adam.

**NO. 86 ST STEPHEN'S GREEN**, called "Buck" Whaley's house, was commenced in 1785 by Richard Capel Whaley, the father of "Buck" Whaley.



FIG. 335.



FIG. 336.

Hibernian Bible Society, Dublin.



Richard Capel Whaley vowed he would build a house such as would make his neighbour's (Lord Clanwilliam's) house look like a pigsty in comparison.

The design is by an architect who was partial to the rococo, though conservative in his adherence to the Palladian rule.

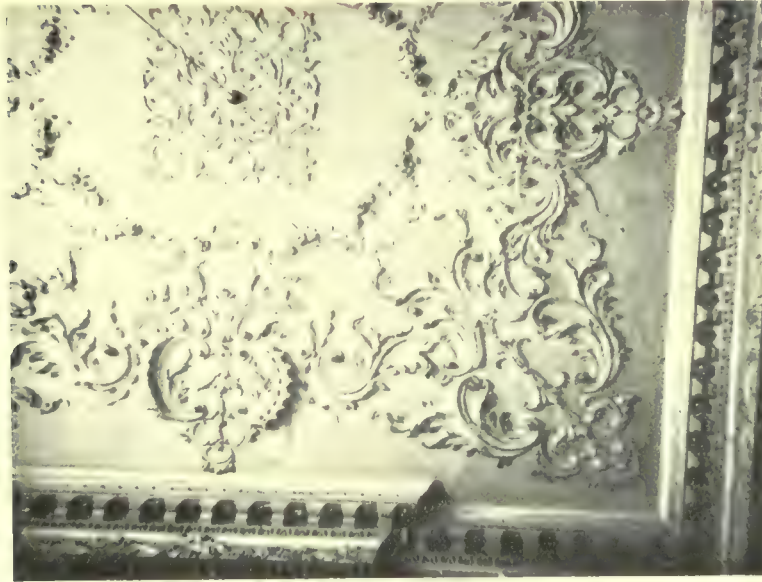


FIG. 337.—Hibernian Bible Society, Dublin.



FIG. 338.—La Touche's Bank, Dublin.

The usual fantastic features prevail—the panel mouldings with broken curves which scroll away into vegetation, or are clasped by it, shells, suspended trophies of musical instruments, and festoons of realistic flowers.

In this frolic of Muses and Graces we may fail to find any principle, but its attraction to those who have felt it is in its freedom from that, and whatever its faults and excesses, it betokens a living art.

Ceilings in the Hibernian Bible Society's premises show work of much the same kind (Figs. 335-337, and 339A).

La Touche's Bank (Fig. 338); the Marquis of Drogheda's house, Sackville Street (Fig. 339); the Stationery Office, Merrion Street; and Sir Thornley Stoker's house, 5 Ely Place, Dublin, show work of very similar spirit.

Besides all this work in the style of Louis Quatorze and his successors, there is much of the Adams school, as in No. 5 Ely Place, in the home of the Royal Dublin Society, the University Club, the Valuation Offices, Professor Mahaffy's house, Belvedere College, a house near St George's Church, the Church Representative Body's premises, St Stephen's Green; the Catholic University, a house in Sackville Street, and in the Examination Hall of Trinity College.

Most of the Irish plaster is of late date, and that it is inferior in design and style to contemporary English work is shown by the illustrations.

The *Irish Builder* tells us that—

"The vast bulk of the later Irish work was the work of the native plasterers, who were descendants of the original Italians, who, like most of the settlers in Ireland since the Norman period, were absorbed in the native race, and to all intents and purposes became more Irish than the Irish themselves. But their real influence departed with a single generation.

"Simultaneously there arose, as Mahaffy and other writers have pointed out, a school of native plasterworkers, who attained to no mean degree of skill in modelling plasterwork. A few Frenchmen and some Englishmen also worked in plaster in Dublin during this period, and their works and records still remain. Amongst the latter may be mentioned George Richardson, who was responsible for a ceiling in the mansion of Lord Montalt, in St Stephen's Green, Dublin, dating from 1770."

Some of the best examples of Irish plasterwork are to be found in little known private dwellings, which it is difficult to get illustrations of, and many interesting ceilings of this part of the British Isles are to be seen in the publications of the Georgian Society. Certainly the best of it attained a very high level of excellence for this period of the art, and the author possesses illustrations of many fine ceilings which it is impossible to find space for in this volume.



FIG. 339.—Staircase Walls, Marquis of Drogheda's House, Sackville Street, Dublin.



FIG. 339A.—Hibernian Bible Society, Dublin.



## CHAPTER X.

## ENGLISH PLASTERWORK OF THE LATER RENAISSANCE.

INIGÒ JONES, the son of a clothmaker, born 15th July 1573, died 1653, introduced an entirely new manner of ceiling decoration from Italy, *after* he had visited there about 1604-5 and 1613-15. Both in precept and practice Palladio's ardent disciple, and the first professional architect England had known, with him there was nothing for it but Rome, and until the revival of Gothic (*c.* 1800) his influence continued to be felt. Employed as he was by Charles I. on the principal architectural works of his reign, there was no one so much in favour, and of Inigo Jones' work we shall see a good deal in this chapter.

From the time of his coming, and after, there was none of the freedom of traditional craftsmanship that existed in Queen Elizabeth's time, nor had he the benefits of traditional skilled craftsmanship to help him out. His men were expected and had to carry out his instructions implicitly: this fact must be read as an observation rather than a grumble. No more will be heard of the old independence of craftsman or master builder, for the architect had to be first. This was not the case with Jones' earlier and perhaps purer work.

He made use of moulded ribs of much greater size than they had been, with panels of simpler design, and much greater dimensions. He employed Italian as well as English workmen to model and carve his ornament, amongst whom Nicholas Stone is mentioned.

At FORDE ABBEY IN DORSET are good examples of his early ceilings, dating about 1610.\* The plans are rectangular; one has a large centre oval, and the two rectangular compartments at each end and side are filled with scroll plants with figures, and a square panel at each corner contains a wreath and a centre-flower. The panels are formed with flat soffited ribs with leaf enrichments held at the sides with fillets. The sides of the ribs are composed of mouldings enriched with the egg-and-tongue members, and beadings. Arabesques fill in the groundwork of this ceiling.

Another somewhat similar ceiling has the panels, and moulded and modillioned ribs turned down into a flattish cove, with pendants at the intersection of the ribs; the rib soffits have a waving leaf-work growing from flat cartouches at the centres; the panels contain circles and rectangles, with figure subjects surrounded by scrolled ornaments. A smaller centre oval occupies the centre panel, with painted heraldry on the flat.

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\* Illustrated in Trigg's and Tanner's "Some Architectural Works of Inigo Jones," B. T. Batsford, 1901.



FIG. 340. PART OF THE CEILING OF SALON, RAYNHAM HALL, NORFOLK.



These ceilings are most likely the work of the English workmen that Jones employed.

Another ceiling of about this period, by Inigo Jones or his workmen, is over the staircase at SYDENHAM HOUSE IN DEVONSHIRE. A flat moulded rib surrounds the ceiling, which is nearly square, close to the moulded cornice; a rib of similar section forms a large circular panel, and is connected with the outer rib by short ribs. In each angle the ribs break outwards, forming



FIG. 341.--Entrance Hall Ceiling, Raynham Hall.

a small external angle similar to the smaller ribs of the Jacobean work. The moulding, and modelling of the fruit, in rather high relief on a flat ground on the soffits of the ribs, is reminiscent of the earlier work at Stockton House, Wilts. A frieze of cartouches and swags of fruit modelled in a similarly soft manner goes round the walls under the cornice, and under the frieze a moulded architrave.

At RAYNHAM HALL, NORFOLK (1630), there are some very fine examples of plaster ceilings by Inigo Jones which show a distinct advance on his previous work, probably due to the Italians he had engaged.

The salon contains perhaps the finest ceiling in this house. Because of the

height of the room, the scale and detail of the modelling is unusually vigorous. The ribs are the entire depth of the main cornice; a deeply moulded and modillioned rib encloses a centre oval panel, which is filled in with a painting. The other panels, as shown on Fig. 340, are of a similar section, and have their soffits enriched with a scrolled acanthus leafage, with flowers and berries. The rib of the centre oval is enriched on its soffit with fruit in high relief, but not undercut. A frieze, enriched with swags, drops and masks, goes round the walls under the cornice, and an enriched architrave under the frieze. Circular rosettes are placed over each intersection of the rib soffits. It is here to be noted that the modelling is not undercut to anything like the extent of the later work of the seventeenth century. This ceiling is one of Jones' best, if not the best of all, but its effect is somewhat spoilt by the indifferent painting of the ceiling panels.

The entrance hall of this house, Figs. 341, 342, contains another fine ceiling by Jones. It is composed of heavy moulded and enriched ribs round



FIG. 342.—Hall Ceiling Detail, Raynham Hall.

the large circular centre panel, and the two octagonal ones at the ends. The soffit of the main panel ribs is treated with a guilloche enrichment. These three main panels are connected with each other, the main ceiling rib running round the cornice by short connecting ribs, and the remaining ceiling area is filled in with four square panels placed anglewise, and with intervening panels, all containing enrichments of fruit and leafage masks or acanthus scroll, which



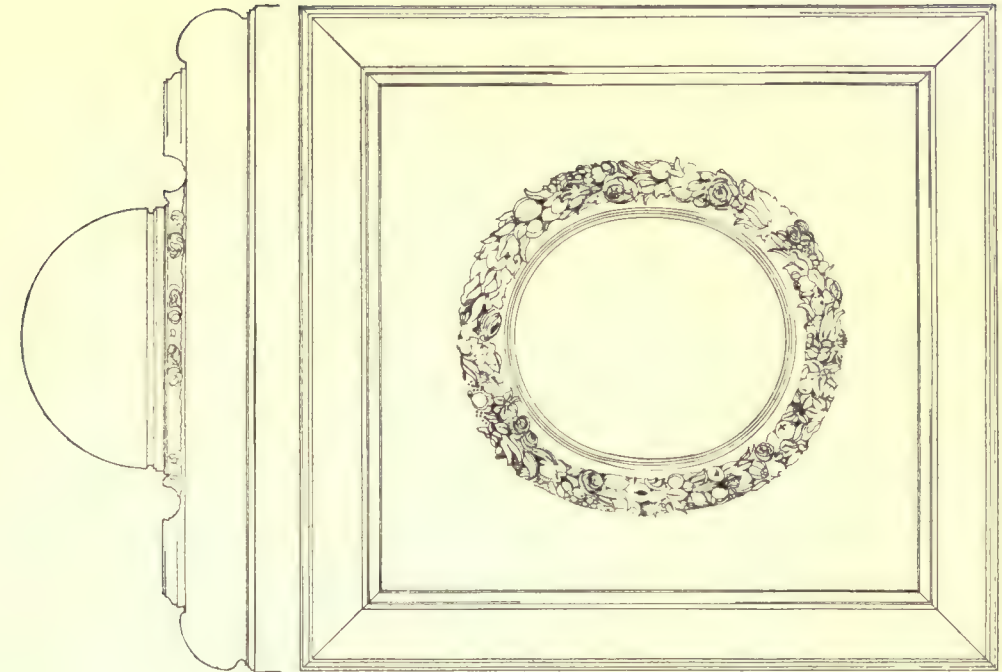


FIG. 344.—Ceiling of Small Room over Porch, off end of Gallery, Small Hall, Kirby Hall.

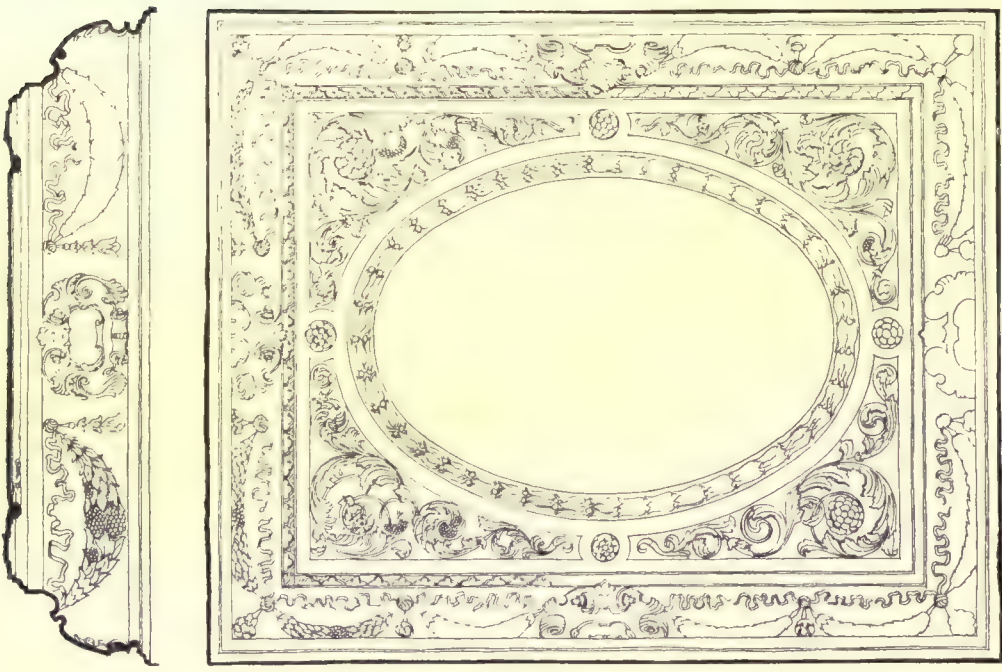


FIG. 343.—Ceiling of Porch to Great Hall, Kirby Hall, Northants.

are French in character. It will be noted that the ribs forming the lesser panels are of considerably shallower section, enriched on the top ogee member next to the ceiling, and on the soffit with a chain pattern, covered at the angles with mitred leaf-work. The plaster enrichment of the frieze in this room shows the same vigorous treatment (mask, swag, and drop) as the one we have just described.\* The drawing-room has an exceedingly interesting ceiling composed of a centre oval, surrounded with four half ovals, and two semicircles at the ends, all connected by the cornice with short, straight, centre ribs. About 1630 Inigo Jones designed the Church of St Catherine Cree, but, owing to the Archbishop of Canterbury objecting to any new methods, Jones was unable to have as much Italian work as he wanted. (The church contains false Gothic groining imitated in plaster, and therefore cannot be taken as an example of work of this period.)

At STOKES BRUERNE PARK (1630-34) the plaster ceilings were beautifully designed in the Italian manner, with frescoes painted by Cipriani. The centre block has unfortunately been destroyed by fire.

At KIRBY HALL IN NORTHANTS are two ceilings by Inigo Jones, about 1638-40. The one illustrated in Fig. 343 is the earlier example. It is in the porch to the great hall, leading from under the

gallery to the inner courtyard; it has four cartouches, with masks in the cove at the centre of the sides and ends, with swags and drops at each side to the angles of the cove. Note the elliptical rib enriched with a husk pattern within the flat of the ceiling, and spandrels of acanthus leafage in flowing scroll, separated by rosettes at the cardinal points of the oval.

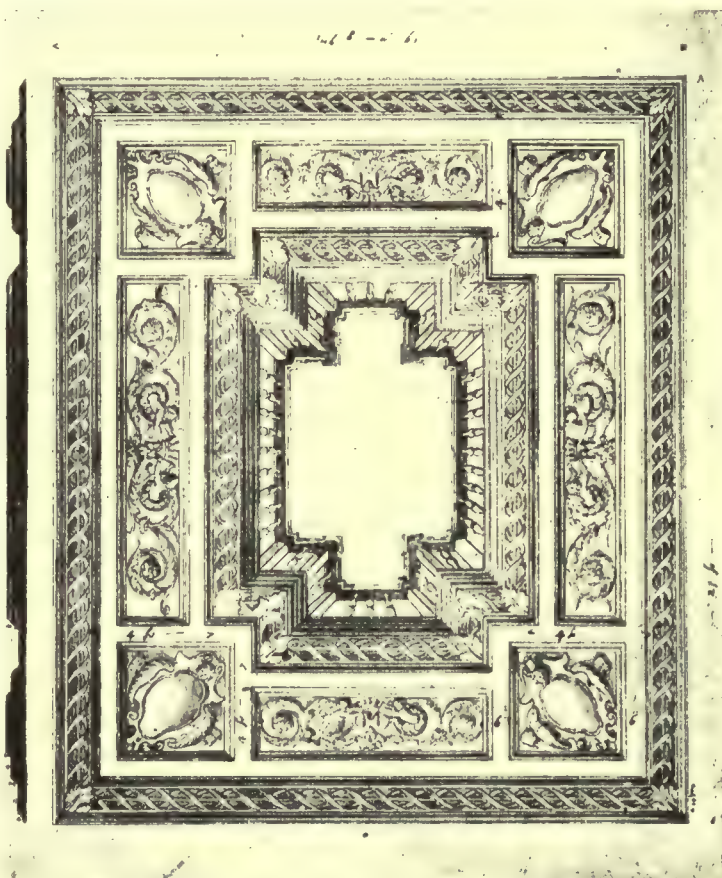


FIG. 345.—Design for a Ceiling at Wilton by Inigo Jones.

*From the Worcester College Collection.*

\* This ceiling was undoubtedly carried out by French workmen, who introduced scroll-work and masks of the Louis XIV. type in the panels.



The other ceiling in the small room over the porch (Fig. 344) opening off one end of the gallery in the great hall, has a plain moulded cove round the walls; in the centre of the ceiling is a small dome, semicircular in section, but neither oval nor circular on plan, moulded at the springing line, and bound in by a wreath of flowers and leafage in vigorous relief.

In 1648 Inigo Jones designed some fine ceilings for Wilton House, near Salisbury, Wiltshire, when his additions were made to the building. The finest is in the room known as "the double-cube room"; it is deeply coved all round the walls, and the flat portion contains a large oval centre panel enclosed by a deeply moulded rib, occupying the full width of the ceiling, but the length is made out by two rectangular panels at each end of the oval. A rib of similar section runs all round the flat portion, and transversely across at the ends of the oval.

The sides of these ribs are moulded and enriched with a general type of ornament used in this period, but the soffits are enriched with swags and drops of leafage, fruit, and flowers, which hang downwards from the ceiling, and are, therefore, modelled in full relief. In a room of such height, this treatment does not appear too heavy. The cove and groundwork of the ceiling are painted in a similar manner to that at Raynham Hall, Norfolk. The idea of the ceiling was taken from Worcester College, and copied in Wilton House. An example from this collection is shown in Fig. 345.

THE BARBER SURGEONS' HALL was one of the few places that escaped destruction in the Great Fire of London. Its ceiling by Inigo Jones is a very interesting one. Round its four sides are two bands of enrichment. At each end the inner one breaks outwards in a small semicircle which the outer band stops against, to make room for a small shield. In the centre of the ceiling is an oval lantern, at the base of which is an oval band of enrichment (fruit and flowers). This oval is nearly as wide as the inner main portion of the ceiling. The ends are made out by two single panels whose sides are parallel with the oval, and inner bands running round the ceiling, and are filled with scrolled ornament.

ASHBURNHAM HOUSE, LITTLE DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, built in 1640, although attributed to Webb, the successor of Inigo Jones, was very possibly designed by the latter. The main ceiling of the handsome staircase is particularly interesting, and well designed. It has at the top a plain dome which is constructed amongst the roof timbers. Round the base of the dome runs a deeply moulded elliptical rib. The top member of the moulded inner side is enriched with an ornament composed of small repeating leaves and berries, which, on looking up, shows an irregular line round the plain work of the dome with good effect. The other mouldings on this side of the rib are enriched with an egg-and-tongue and leaf ornament. The soffit of this rib is enriched with flowers and fruit, which run round in a continuous band. A little below this rib is another moulded rib, oval in plan, with larger diameter than the foregoing, and moulded at the side, and panelled on the soffit, which is supported by four groups of Ionic columns, three in each group, which are worked in plaster. The staircase ceiling on the next floor below this has a large open well on which the balustrade and columns before mentioned stand. The thickness of the floor is moulded all round with an enriched

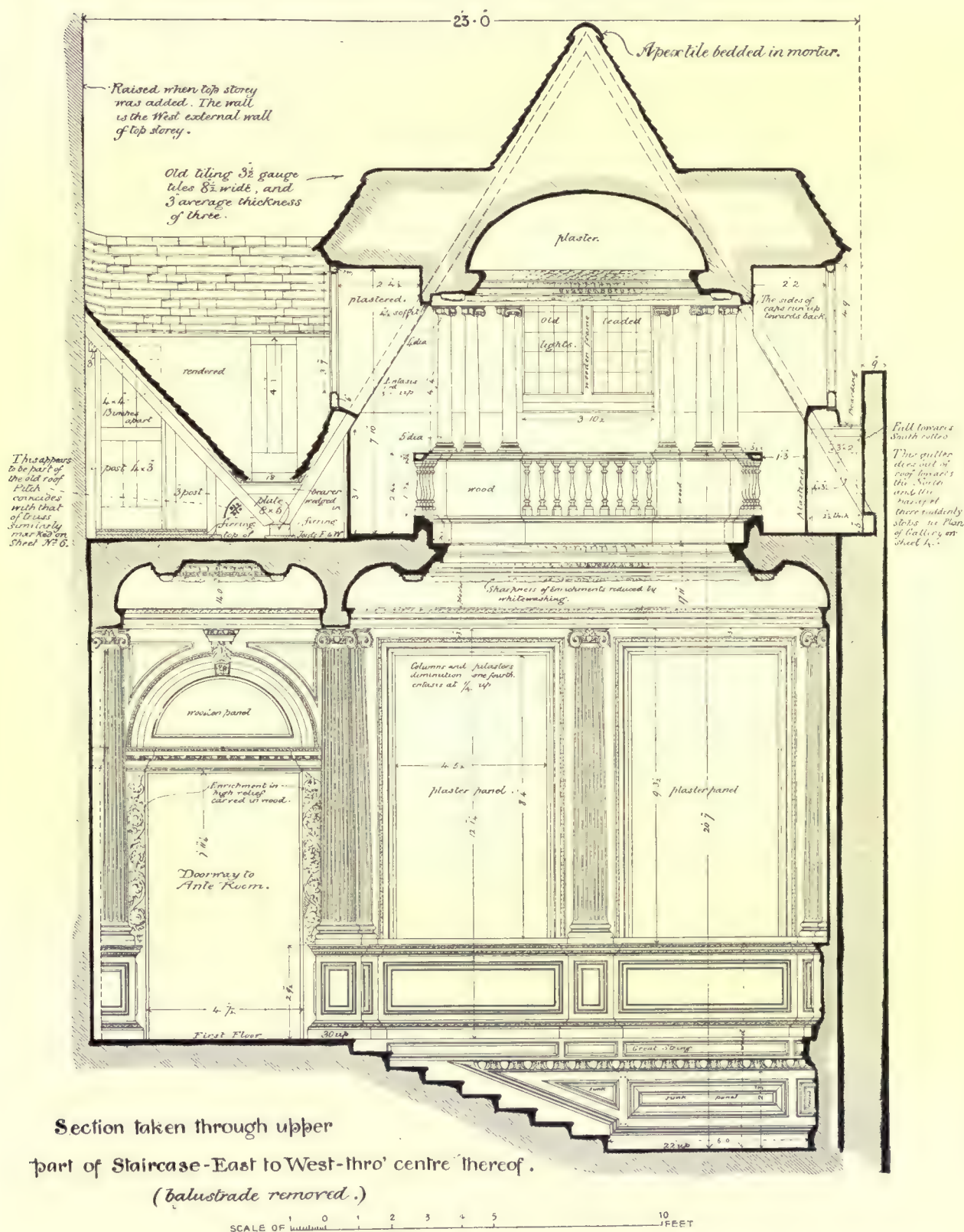


FIG. 346.—SECTION THROUGH CUPOLA, &C., ASHBURNHAM HOUSE, LITTLE DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER.  
*Harry Sirr, F.R.I.B.A., del.*





FIG. 347.—PART OF CEILING OF STAIRCASE, ASHBURNHAM HOUSE.





FIG. 348.—DETAIL OF ENRICHMENTS, STAIRCASE CEILING, ASHBURNHAM HOUSE.



cornice. At the soffit of this cornice runs an oval band of flowered enrichment enclosed between moulding. The remainder of the rectangle is enclosed by a flat moulded rib at the top of a small cove which runs all round the ceiling. The soffit of this rib is enriched with a delicately modelled, scrolled acanthus leafage and rosette ornament which stops against the sides of the oval bands. The panel thus formed between the oval and flat rib at either end is filled with scrolled acanthus in full relief of rather an early pattern, similar to that at Forde Abbey. A circular rosette of acanthus leafage is planted at each corner of the soffit of the flat rectangular rib at the top of the cove. The cove springs from a moulded architrave with enriched members, which is supported by Ionic pilasters. Where the landing occurs on one



FIG. 349.—Detail of Staircase Landing, Ashburnham House.

side of the ceiling, complete columns support a panel soffit. The ceiling of this landing is divided into rectangular spaces by ribs running from the columns to the wall pilasters. Each space is coved all round, springing from a moulded architrave, the flat space is enclosed by a richly moulded rib whose soffit is enriched with flowers and fruit similar to the oval rib round the well of the staircase. Fig. 346 gives the section of the staircase and cupola, while photographs showing views and details of the plasterwork are given in Figs. 347-349.

There is much beautiful plasterwork of this type in the house. In the drawing-room (Figs. 350, 351) is a beautiful ceiling, somewhat more refined in detail than the foregoing. A very rich cornice, whose main ogee member is enriched with an

alternate acanthus leaf and plain leaf, above which is a group of enriched mouldings of the husk, leaf, and bedded members. The main feature of the ceiling is a large circular dome, with a plain face. At the base of this dome runs a band of finely modelled fruit, flower, and berries, planted on the flat of the ceiling without enclosing mouldings. Four triangular spandrel panels occur at each corner, making a square. They contain scrolled leafage, amongst which are small animals, all in full relief, and enclosed in plain mouldings. At either end of the circle the space remaining contains three square panels. The centre one at each end is enclosed with a husk enrichment in mouldings, and a small inner moulding encloses a vigorously modelled cartouche,



FIG. 350.—Drawing-room Ceiling, Ashburnham House.

with cherubs' heads over, and scrolled acanthus leafage at side filling the inner panel. This shows more undercutting than the rest. It is beautifully modelled, and the drawing is excellent. The two square panels on either side of this at each end of the room are enclosed with an acanthus leaf enrichment, running spirally round a central stem, with mouldings on either side. In each of these four corner panels is a small dome whose surface is plain, and whose diameter is nearly the same length as one side of the panel. It is ornamented with a large wreath of flowers and fruit, similar to that of the main dome. The four spandrels in each panel are filled with a cherub's head and wings in full relief. The modelling in this room is carried to a fine degree of finish, and is by a different hand to that in the staircase. It has



not suffered as the staircase has by having so many coats of whitewash laid over the plasterwork.

"THE CLOSE," WESTMINSTER SCHOOL, has also a plaster ceiling of considerable interest belonging to about this period.

At COLESHILL HOUSE IN BERKSHIRE, built in 1650, one of Jones' most perfect works, are some fine ceilings. The staircase area is divided into nine rectangular panels, formed by the upper mouldings of the cornice, above the modillions; the soffit is enriched with a guilloche ornament, and large spinning rosettes of leafage occupy the intersection. In the centre and largest panel is a large oval lying over the ribs forming the panel; the other eight panels are occupied by lesser



FIG. 351. -Drawing-room Ceiling Detail, Ashburnham House.

ovals and circular wreaths of leafage inside the ceiling area. Several other wreaths are disposed on the wall surface under the cornice level, and at the first floor level.

The salon ceiling is the finest, perhaps, in this house (Fig. 352). It is similar to the staircase ceiling, but its ribs are heavier. The centre circle has an enriched soffit of flowers and fruit, with rosettes at the four cardinal points. The other subsidiary ribs have their soffits enriched with scrolled acanthus leafage, interspersed with cherubs in full relief; whirling rosettes are placed over the intersections. The frieze is ornamented with cartouches, and swags of flowers and fruit, which stand clear of the background; an enriched moulded architrave runs all round the room under the frieze.



FIG. 352.—CEILING OF THE SALON, COLESHILL HOUSE, BERKSHIRE.



There is a very interesting ceiling in the room now used as the billiard-room. The soffit is enriched with oak leaves and acorns, overlapping each other in a continuous manner, and bound together by ribbon. The ribs are not so deep as those on the ceiling in the salon, but the centre panel is raised above the level of the others by a modillioned and enriched cornice. The four angle panels have birds and cornucopiæ modelled in full relief. The general effect of this ceiling, though heavy, is very good, and as a pattern it might be copied.

A crude attempt at copying Jones' work was made in Sparrow's House,

Ipswich. The soffits of the ribs are of an earlier type, probably a stock pattern of the plaster-worker. The cartouches in the angle are very crude, so too are the wreaths in each compartment.

John Webb, a nephew of Inigo Jones, and Edward Carter very humbly followed their master, but their work is inferior in spirit; in some cases clumsy, and coarser in detail and execution. Webb, to whom Jones bequeathed his designs and drawings, practised between 1643 to 1670. He built Thorpe Hall in 1665. The elaborate ceiling in the dining-room shows a falling off in detail; he was undoubtedly influenced in the general setting of it by the designs for ceilings which had been left him; possibly by the design for

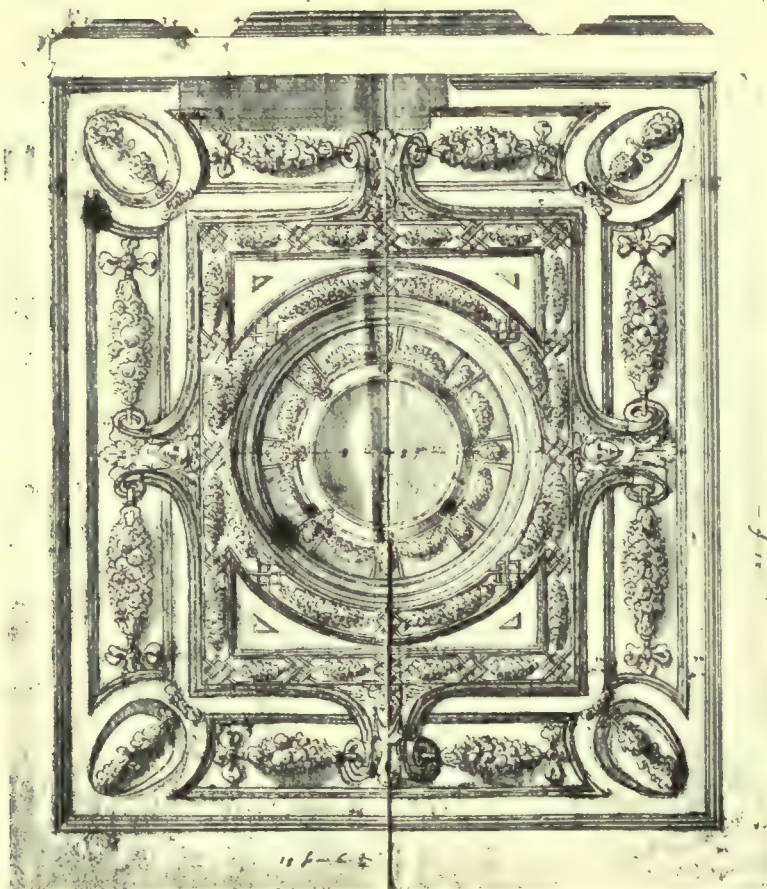


FIG. 353.—Ceiling designed by Inigo Jones for the Countess of Carnarvon's Bedchamber.

*From Worcester College Collection.*

the Countess of Carnarvon's bedchamber in the Worcester College Collection (Fig. 353). He built Amesbury House, Wilts, 1654, the interior of which was partially destroyed by fire in 1855, and Ashdown House, Berkshire, 1665.

ELTHAM HOUSE, KENT (1590), contains some fine plasterwork, the date of which is about 1660, and though the architect's name is unknown, the evidence of the detail points to Webb being its author.

The drawing-room (or salon) ceiling on the first floor is very elaborate, but it





FIG. 354.—SALON, WESTWOOD PARK, DROITWICH.



is not so good on the whole as the one at Thorpe Hall, and as the modelling is very similar in detail to other examples of it, it is probably Webb's own work.

A large plain rectangular panel forms the centre portion of the ceiling, surrounded by a wide band of scrolled acanthus leafage in moderate relief, moulded on the inner side by a modillioned cornice, and bordered on the outer side by a narrow belt of leaf enrichment, semicircular in section, bound together by ribbon. This is of the width of the room. At each end of it there are large circular plain



FIG. 355.—Detail from Ceiling of the Salon, Westwood Park.

panels enclosed by a narrower band of flowers, semicircular in section, the modelling of which is unusual, and keeps to the semicircular contour of the section. At the sides of these circular panels the ground is filled with scrolled acanthus leafage to make out the square to the sides of the room. The whole is bounded by a small enriched moulding planted on the flat of the ceiling, and an enriched cornice round the walls.

At WESTWOOD PARK, NEAR DROITWICH, WORCESTERSHIRE, there is much exceedingly fine plasterwork, executed in the time of the Commonwealth, 1649-59, when the wings of the house were added. The salon ceiling in general effect is one of the finest of this period (see Figs. 354, 355), and contains some

very interesting detail. The modelled band enclosing the centre rectangular panel with curved ends consists of pointed leaves apparently carved and stuck on. Between each leaf is a daisy-like flower on a thin stem in full relief, and attached by the same method. The leaves run in opposite directions from the centre on every side. The inner side of the rib has a leaf enrichment made up in a similar manner. The centre wreath and the other wreaths at the ends of the salon, and also the wreaths in the bay window, are similar in detail; so, too, the flatter enrichment bordering the panel

round the centre of the rectangle. These panels are filled with some interesting ornament. From a winding central stem spring groups of leaves and seed-pods, all apparently cast and stuck on, which have a quaint effect. There are similar panels enclosed in plain moulding round the wreaths of the side bay windows. The two centre panels near the centre of the rectangle and in the bay windows have an enriched moulding enclosing them formed of strap-work loosely wound round a centre rod, and are undercut to such an extent that the lower part of each loop hangs quite clear. The two outer panels of the three at each end of the room are filled with sprays of roses, the leaves and blossoms all cast separately, and stuck in place with

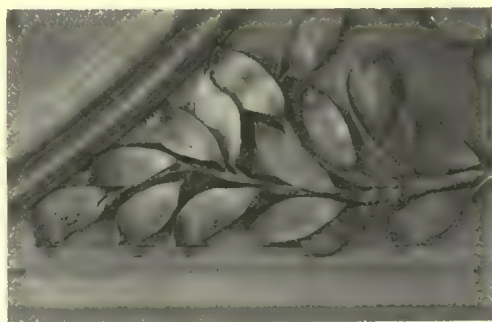


FIG. 356.—Portion of Spandrel Panel, Japanese Room, Westwood Park.

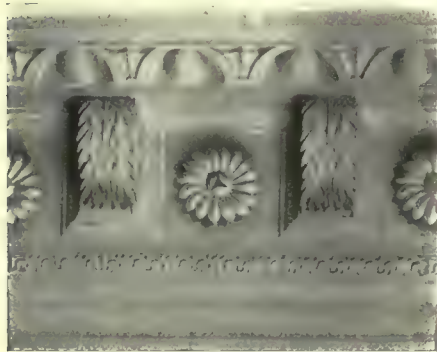


FIG. 357.—Cornice Detail of White Room, Westwood Park.

good effect. A shell containing a smaller shell from which the sprays grow is fixed in some panels, but omitted in others. The frieze of swags and drops is composed of quaintly modelled flower blossoms and leaves, which are fixed in a similar manner below a moulded cornice in a flat cove, and stand quite clear of the ground in places from which they are supported by wires. The general design of this ceiling is very good; the moulding and general distribution of the plain and modelled surfaces quite admirable. The deeply moulded rib forming the centre rectangular panel with curved ends, and the flatter panel mouldings and

wreaths at either end, is an arrangement that might well be copied.

The room known as the "White Room" contains a ceiling of quite a different character, and in the detail of its modelling a more skilful hand can be detected. In the central oval band the cluster of fruit, flowers, and leafage round a central stem is admirable, showing the beautiful modelling to advantage, and not appearing such a confused mass as a continuous enrichment with similar detail would. The modelling in this band is free and good, and can be classed with

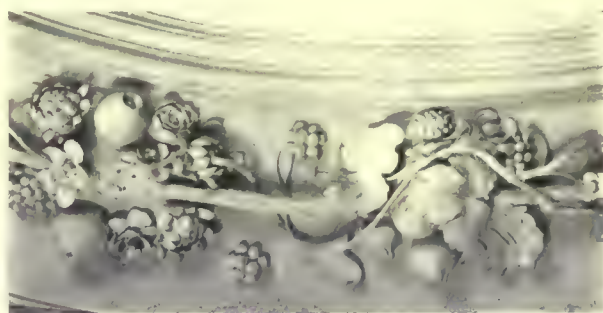


FIG. 358.—Portion of Central Oval, White Room, Westwood Park.

other good work of the kind in this country. Though earlier than that of the Grinling Gibbons school it is certainly more satisfactory. The two panels which make up the rectangle contain sprays of palm in one, and sprays of laurel in the other, well



modelled, and properly subordinated (Fig. 356). The two centre rectangular panels enclosed in plain mouldings at each end of the room contain flowing scroll-work of acanthus leafage, pleasing in detail, growing from each side of a cartouche containing the arms of the owner. The whole is bound by a modillioned cornice of good detail and enrichment (Figs. 357, 358).

The room known as the "Japanese Room," because of its wall decoration, contains an interesting ceiling of a different type to either of the foregoing. A rectangular panel with curved ends similar in shape to the central panel of the salon is enclosed by a flat moulded rib with a wide soffit, and takes up the whole width of the room. The soffit is enriched with a flowing acanthus scroll ornament similar in feeling to that of the "White Room." In the centre of this panel is planted a rosette of acanthus leafage from which spring tendrils of leafage that look rather French than English. At either end of this centre panel is a small segmental moulded panel, and two triangular panels to make out the rectangle. The segmental panels contain small sprays of palm growing from a shell, the triangular panels a very finely modelled conventionalised tree, filling each panel with its flowers and fruit and leafage in nearly full relief. The vine, orange, lemon, and plum will be recognised. The two narrow moulded rectangular panels inserted to lengthen the room at each end contain at one end swags of fruit and flowers, similar in modelling to those in the "White Room," and at the other end two sprays of rose blossoms crossed and tied with ribbon. A cornice similar to that at the "White Room" goes round the whole.

At SUDBURY HALL, DERBY, there is similar work to that at Westwood Park in almost all the principal rooms of the house, which appears to have been done about the same time; as the modelling and setting is much alike in both places, it was probably done by the same stuccoists.

The long gallery is not so satisfactory in its effect as the other rooms. The soffits of the flat ribs enriched with scrolled acanthus leafage, and flowers in full relief, are all too much on one plane, and consequently rather monotonous when viewed from one end. The inner wreath and rectangle are similar in detail to those at Westwood Park salon, and are without the enclosing mouldings. The small spandrel panels are enclosed in a moulding of spirally twisted strap-work, and the leaves of the palms they contain hang quite clear of the ground. The deep cove cornice going all round contains large shells which hold palm leaves, and swags, and masks. Though modelled in a similarly free and vigorous manner, it seems rather too thin, and full of sharp points.

The little ceiling of the landing over the entrance to the salon is interesting. A rectangular painted panel in the centre is bordered by a wide soffit which takes up the width of the ceiling. The soffit is enriched by a cartouche at each end, round which the outer moulding is broken by small semicircles and flowing acanthus leafage, modelled in the same free and vigorous manner. The mouldings on each side of this soffit are enriched with spiral strap-work hanging loosely from a central rod. The two small panels at each end of the central panel have their moulding enriched with a husk ornament, and contain sprays of laurel leafage, and berries tied with ribbon. A cove and enriched cornice goes round this ceiling on three sides. The cove is ornamented with swags and drops of a severer type; but the

modelling is otherwise similar. The effect of this ceiling is more satisfactory, although resembling in general the one in the long gallery. The ceiling of the north hall over the staircase is a very fine one. The centre circular enriched band is vigorously modelled, and appears to have been cast, or modelled by hand, and attached to its present place. The four spandrel panels which are at a lower level than the centre panel, contain exceptionally vigorous modelling of acanthus leafage, flowers, berries, &c., enclosed in plain mouldings. The two small rectangular panels at each end also contain small oil paintings at the same level as the centre. The moulding of the panels at each end of these is enriched with a husk ornament, and contains sprays of laurel leafage. A coved and enriched cornice runs round the whole, and is enriched with swags and drops, tied with ribbon, and supported in each corner by a small cherub—all these are in full relief. The general effect of this ceiling is fine, and greatly enhanced by the painted panels.

The room known as the "Queen's Room" contains a very fine ceiling, with an unusual but pleasing treatment. The large circular plain space is enclosed by plain mouldings, outside which is a band of fruit, flowers, and leafage. The arrangement of the room at Westwood Park is like this, in which there are clusters of flowers and fruit at intervals, on a central stem which is clear of the ground. Around it, between the clusters, twine strings of small blossoms with graceful effect. The modelling in this band is remarkably naturalistic, the stem-work and petals of the flowers being most delicate studies from life. Outside this band is an ogee moulding, enriched with acanthus leafage rectangular on plan, with its corners broken inwards in a quarter circle. In each corner of the room is a curious arrangement of scrolled acanthus leafage. The scroll appears to grow out of the corner of the ceiling, and winds itself round in a volute-like manner to a centre rosette. The detail of this leafage is not of the long narrow flowing type, but consists of short leaves which spring from a central stem. Small, plain raised moulded panels fill out the ceiling to the cornice. The frieze is enriched with a series of oak leaves and acorns which overlap. The leaves are both modelled and cast, instead of being cast whole in the more usual way.

These ceilings at Westwood Park and Sudbury Hall belong to a different school to those which were mentioned before, and may be ascribed to foreign workmen. Some of the enrichments, notably in the "White Room" at Westwood, and "Queen's Room" at Sudbury Hall, are handled in a very clever and spirited manner. The delicate stem-work was most probably made of lead piping and strips of sheet lead as was the custom later.

At LEES COURT, FAVERSHAM, a country house to which Inigo Jones made considerable additions, there is some very interesting and dignified plasterwork designed by this master of building.

There is a very curious ceiling which is a poor imitation of this kind of work at Monmouth Castle, the detail of which is all out of scale, ungraceful, and ill drawn. Most striking in this are the crudely modelled swags which hang from the groundwork of the ceiling, and put one in mind of Christmas bazaar decorations.

The ceiling of the CHURCH OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR, PANTILES, TUNBRIDGE WELLS (1682-90) (Figs. 359, 360), shows that the tradition survived the wars,





FIG. 359.—CHURCH OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR, PANTILES, TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

though the fashion was changing already, and the work of Sir Christopher Wren must engage our attention next.

Sir Christopher Wren (born 1632, died 1723), another great architect, resembled Inigo Jones and John Webb in his way of preparing designs, detailing everything in advance, leaving nothing to tradition. He was fortunate in coming across a man of genius in the person of Grinling Gibbons, a "naturalistic" carver, who is said to have been discovered by Evelyn amongst a colony of carvers at Deptford, where figure-heads for three-deckers and other such nautical trophies were more wanted than anything else. Gibbons executed much plasterwork under Wren's orders, in addition to the wood-carving which was to make him famous. Wren was never in Italy, but had travelled in France, where he was introduced to Bernini, the architect of the Louvre, who showed him the designs he had made for that. On his return, he brought with him his sketches and measured drawings of many of the most famous buildings of

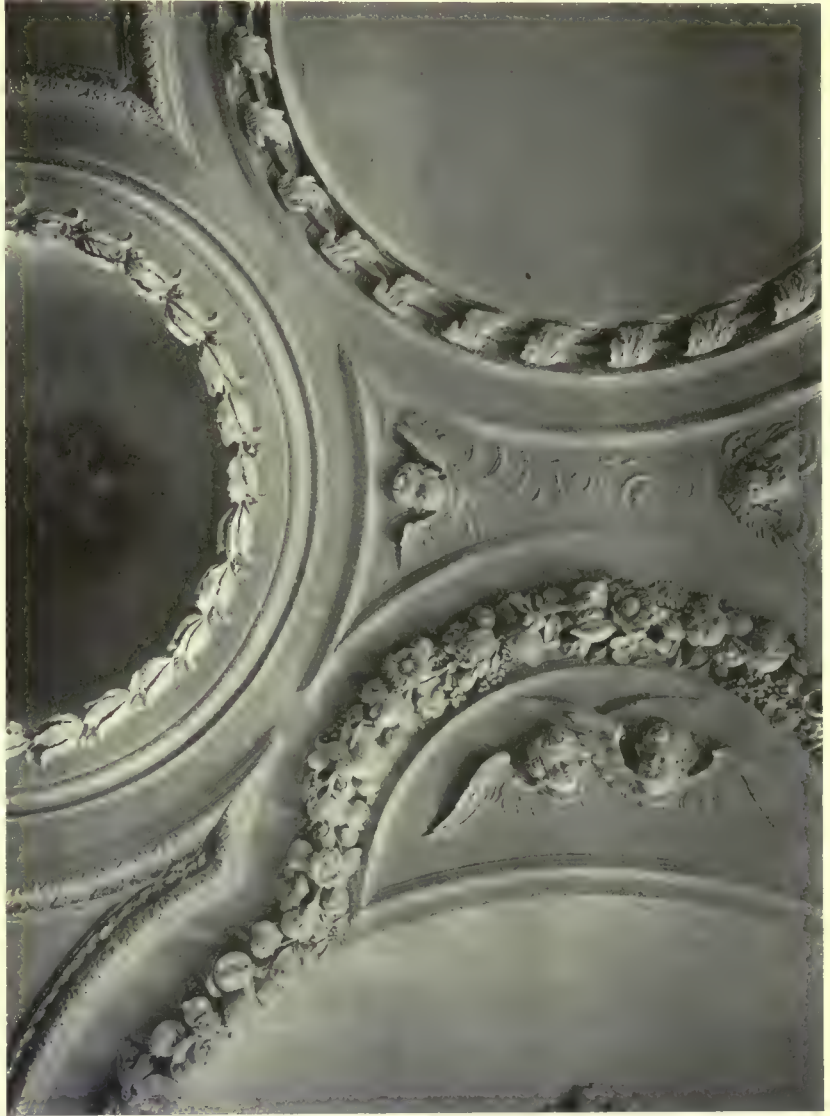


FIG. 360.—Church of King Charles the Martyr.

France, erected during the reign of Louis XIV., the patron of every art. Wren mentions by name Van Ostal and Arnoldini as the plasterers whose work he had so much admired in the Louvre. Also Perrot, famous for basso-relievos. Later in life he was directed by William and Mary to make the well-known addition of state apartments to their palace at Hampton Court, in which he imitated that of Versailles.



It was rather the detail than the *ensemble* of the French style of design that was imitated in the stucco-work of that time. The festoons of flowers and fruit, which figure so largely there, were invariably beautifully modelled; too finely finished, perhaps, and too true to Nature to be equally true in art, and yet beyond praise for their skill when the talk is only of that.

There were very few Italian stucco-workers in England during this period; only two or three that we have heard of between 1643 and the beginning of the eighteenth century. The work done all that while was given chiefly to English artists, like that in the Church of King Charles the Martyr at Tunbridge Wells, and in certain houses thereby which, with the exception of Groombridge, are attributed to Weatherall and Hoogood. In Old Montague House a French architect employed his own countrymen, but that case was exceptional quite, and the employment of native artists was general.

The stucco-work of Wren's ceilings was carried to a very high degree of finish. Amongst the various ceilings modelled from his designs were those at Lord Chesterfield's house, Holme Lacy in Herefordshire, Belton House, Grantham, and others, besides the work which will presently be described in the London city churches. Wren imported detail wholesale from the Palace of Versailles. A comparison of the detail of his bold fruit and flowers with that of the ceiling of Inigo Jones' drawing-room at Stockton, and of the great ceiling rib at Raynham, would show what the difference is.

Wren took his detail on trust. With all his genius as an architect, his ornament was never quite free from the spirit of the amateur; excellent as it once was, his plastering became more and more meaningless as it increased in complexity.

He had too much work upon his hands to allow him to see whereto it was tending, and left the actual designing and modelling too much to Grinling Gibbons and others whom he had under him, for Gibbons was a great "naturalist," and his modelled work perhaps sometimes erred on the side of overwhelming naturalism and realism, as did his marvellous carving, than it did when the conventional *spirit* of the architect and modeller was combined in him and restrained him. Most of the plasterwork of Gibbons' school consisted, like the master's carving in wood, of realistic sprays of fruit, flowers, and foliage, frequently suspended by single stems composed of lead piping, birds, &c., in full relief. Owing to the fact that the carver was left with a free hand, the result, viewed as a whole, lacked that architectural spirit which demands that good architectural ornament shall be subordinate to the general conception of the building as a whole.

In most of his buildings Wren gave immense scope to the plasterworker, particularly in his London churches, by his picturesque and clever arrangements of vaulting, arcading, &c., in which he has never been surpassed. But these were architectural considerations which left the decoration untouched, whereas that should never be absent from the conception the architect has of his building—never left, as it has to be when hands are as full as Wren's were, to the caprice of another artist.

St Stephen's, Walbrook (Fig. 361); St James', Piccadilly (Fig. 369); St Clement Danes (Figs. 365-367); and St Mildred's, Bread Street (Figs. 370, 371), contain excellent examples of his skill in the dispositions of his interiors.

In ST PAUL'S there is little or no modelling in this material. The inner dome is plastered on the inside, and painted with Scriptural subjects.

ST MARY-LE-BOW (1671) was the first of the city churches to be rebuilt after the Fire of London. The central nave is plastered, with a single vault, elliptical in section, divided into three bays by two cross ribs, springing from the entablature over each of the piers. The ribs are moulded and enriched with an egg-and-tongue on the sides; the soffits with a circular rosette of acanthus leafage, planted in square coffer panels. There are two similar half ribs at each end of the vault. Two ribs of less projection run longitudinally between, enriched on a soffit with a running acanthus leaf ornament, and moulded sides, forming three large square centre panels which have an inner rich moulding, as have also the smaller panels on each side. The surface of each panel is sunk inside this inner moulding.

ST STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK (1672), is considered to be Wren's finest church. The main feature in the interior is the large dome 45 feet in diameter at base, covering the centre part of the nave. A sketch plan is shown in Fig. 361. The dome springs from a cornice supported by eight pendentives, whose panels are filled with vigorously modelled undercut cartouches. The pendentives are formed by the semicircular vault of the aisles and transepts on the four square sides of the octagon, and four arches across the angles. The arrangement of the coffered panels, which radiate towards the eye of the lantern of the dome, is very good. They contain vigorously modelled and undercut rosettes and palm sprays. The panel vaults of the aisles are shown by the intersection of window openings, and have a flat enriched rib running transversely across between each opening. The treatment of the interior of this church is excellent, but the modelled detail is rather coarsely finished.

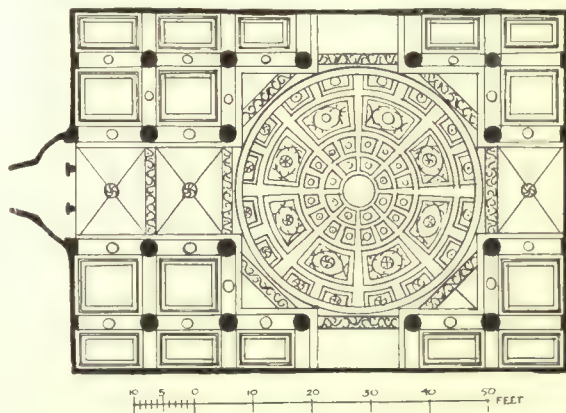


FIG. 361.—St Stephen's, Walbrook.

ST MARY AT HILL, and ST MICHAEL, CORNHILL.—These come next, having been commenced in the same year, but the plasterwork in the latter, described by Hatton, no longer exists. The church was completely altered some years ago by Sir Gilbert Scott, who gave it the Gothic character which it now possesses, and despoiled it at the same time of the original plasterwork.

The ceiling at ST MARY AT HILL, like that of St Stephen's, Walbrook (Fig. 361), had for its main feature a coffered dome, but on four pendentives instead of eight, whose panels were filled with sprays of realistic leafage. The pendentives were formed by the intersection of the four barrel vaults of nave, transepts, and chancel. A flat frieze enriched with a key fret, and groups of cherubs' heads at intervals, took the place of a cornice round the base of the dome. The ribs of the barrel vaults over the columns were coffered with square



panels, each containing an acanthus rosette. The barrel vaults were divided into panels with a guilloche enrichment. (These panels in vault over chancel were narrower than those over transepts.) (See Fig. 362.) The two end panels contained a scroll enrichment running their whole length of about one-third of their width, and the centre panel a wreath of similar character. The lunette formed by the barrel vault against the end wall of the chancel was panelled and enriched with similar ornament.

The modelling of the plasterwork in this church was more delicate than in that of St Stephen's or St Mary-le-Bow. It was smaller in detail and had the appearance of being later. The entablature of the main order was displaced by an architrave cornice of slight projection. The caps to the columns were similar to those of the Composite order without the volutes.

ST OLAVE, JEWRY, and ST BENET-FINK were commenced in 1673, but have both been lately pulled down. The latter had a very interesting plan. The centre

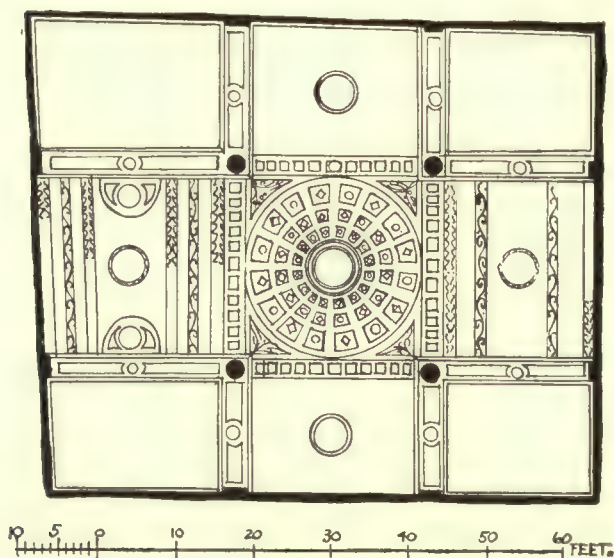


FIG. 362.—St Mary at Hill.

lip was the base of an elliptical dome. The entablature coming from each angle formed the base of a barrel vault to each compartment. These vaults formed a series of pendentives, upon which the dome rested.

In 1674 ST DIONIS BACKCHURCH was built, but was pulled down about twenty years ago. It contained a barrel vault over the nave springing from an Ionic entablature; the vault was groined at the sides by the intersection of bonnets of semicircular clerestory windows; the ceilings of the aisles at each side of the nave were flat.

ST GEORGE, BOTOLPH LANE, was also finished in 1674. The plan of the

ceiling is almost a square; the nave has a barrel vault, springing from an entablature of the Composite order. Its length is divided into three bays by flat ribs enriched on the soffit by a running scroll ornament; each bay is subdivided into panels. (In the western and central of these the vault is intersected by semicircular window openings forming groins.) The ceilings of the aisles were flat.

There is very little plasterwork in St MICHAEL'S, WOOD STREET, finished in 1675. The plan is a rectangle surrounded by a plain cove.

ST MAGNUS, LONDON BRIDGE, finished in 1676, was badly damaged by fire in 1760. It contains little decorative plasterwork; what there is is very poor.

ST JAMES', GARLICK HYTHE, was begun in 1676, but not finished until 1683. The interior is dignified, and the ceiling an interesting one, but the effect of its beautiful ornament is marred by the absurd filigree, dotted about in a meaningless manner by some modern decorator. The nave runs the whole length of the church, and is deeply coved on all sides, springing from an architrave cornice

supported by an Ionic order, whose caps are richly modelled. The circular clerestory window openings and the barrel vaults of the transepts intersect and form groins with the cove on each side of the nave. Similar groins occur in the cove at each end of the nave by the barrel vault of the chancel. An enriched cornice and soffit divides the cove from the flat portion of the ceiling. The main ceiling is divided by vigorously modelled enriched mouldings into three plain panels, and two smaller end panels are filled with scrolled acanthus leafage in high relief. The weight of the enrichment is well suited to the height of the ceiling, but its effect is spoilt by the misapplication of painted stencil and gilding by a modern hand, which shows only too clearly that the restorer was ignorant of the first principles of decoration. The aisles have a flat ceiling, divided into panels by enriched beams.

ST MILDRED, POULTRY, was rebuilt in 1676, and has been recently demolished.

ST STEPHEN'S, COLEMAN STREET, was rebuilt in the same year. Neither church had any plasterwork that we need notice.

ST LAWRENCE, JEWRY, was commenced in 1671, and finished 1677. It contains in profusion some very fine carved oak-work, and elaborate plasterwork of this period. A flat ceiling covers the whole body of the church, which is divided into eighteen sunk panels by deep moulded beams, with panelled and moulded soffits which have a rosette of acanthus leaf at each intersection. Some of the panels are filled with characteristic palm branches and wreaths. A moulded cornice with an enriched soffit separates the flat ceiling from the coves. Panelled bands, enriched with a running ornament terminating in a scroll, carry the line of the pilasters to the beam of the flat ceiling. Lunettes intersect the cove with a groin on all sides, some containing circular windows, between these bands. The cove springs from an enriched entablature of the Corinthian order. Over the circular openings in the east and west walls there are finely modelled swags, drops, and cartouches. The ceiling of the vestry is a very rich specimen of contemporary plasterwork. A large quatrefoiled panel is enclosed within a moulded and heavily enriched rib, the soffit of which has a deeply undercut enrichment of fruit and flowers, and the spandrel panels at each corner contain vigorously modelled scrolled leafage. The centre panel contains a fine painting, representing the apotheosis of St Lawrence by Fuller, Junior, and the cornice round the vestry is of oak.

ST NICHOLAS, COLE ABBEY, was begun in 1673 and finished in 1677. It contains a flat plaster ceiling over the main part of the church divided into square panels, five to the length, and three to the width, with flat enriched beams over the pilasters, which have circular rosettes added later on their intersections; the four corner and centre compartments contain circular rosettes of acanthus foliage planted in the centre: the enriched entablature and the pilaster caps are finely finished.

ST MARY, ALDERMANBURY, and ST MICHAEL, QUEENHITHE, were finished in 1677. The ceiling over the nave in the former was barrel-vaulted, plain, except for bands of enrichment which divided it into panels; it sprang from an enriched Composite entablature supported by columns. There were two circular clerestory window openings which intersected the main vault with a groin, the crown of which had a large circular acanthus flower planted on it.



The latter church has lately been removed. It contained in its day a very small quantity of decorative plasterwork.

ST MICHAEL, BASSISHAW, commenced in 1676, was completed in 1679. The ceiling is similar to that of St Mary, Aldermanbury, the main vault being divided into square moulded panels.

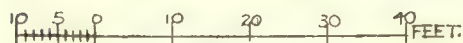
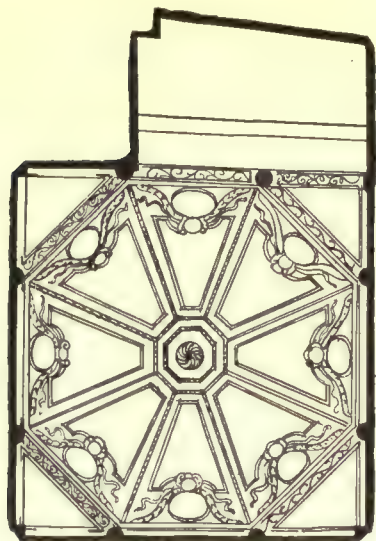


FIG. 363. —St Swithin, London Stone.

ST SWITHIN, LONDON STONE, which was built in 1679, has a very interesting ceiling. The plan of the body of the church is square, the corners of which are cut off at the level of a Composite entablature supported by engaged columns, except at one angle (Fig. 363). The Composite cap and the enrichments of the entablature are refined in detail; so also is the enriched soffit of scrolled leafage. Upon this octagonal entablature springs an eight-sided dome 42 feet in diameter and 40 from floor, the angles of which are enriched with a husk ornament. In the four sides of the dome (over the angles) are four circular windows, and the remaining four sides have circular panels to match the window openings, gracefully draped with modelled swags in full relief of fruit and flowers, suspended from

a cartouche over each opening. The upper portion is plainly panelled. The careful and effective disposition of enriched and plain surfaces should be specially noticed here.

ST BARTHOLOMEW, EXCHANGE.—As this, one of the least interesting of Wren's churches, was taken down and rebuilt in 1839, its plasterwork will not be noticed.

ST BRIDE'S, FLEET STREET, built in 1680, is another interesting example of Wren's work. The nave here is barrel-vaulted, slightly elliptical in section, groined at the intersection of circular window openings; it is divided from the aisles by an arcading running the length of the church, which is supported by a Doric order with dentilled cornice. The soffit of this arcading is coffered with small square panels, each containing a vigorously modelled rosette of varying design; the circular moulded architrave round each arcade is broken by a key-block of finely modelled cherubs' heads and wings, which form a connecting link with the flat moulded band, from which

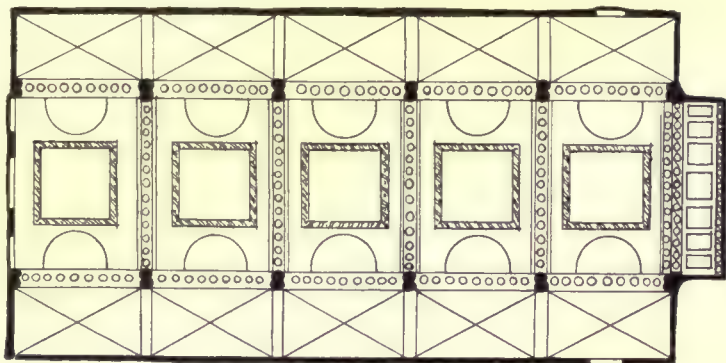


FIG. 364.—St Bride's, Fleet Street.

springs the main barrel vault; in each spandrel over this arcading there is a well-designed and modelled corbel, with an enriched moulding (Fig. 364), from which spring the main ceiling ribs, coffered in a similar manner to those of the arcading; the spaces between these ribs are formed into panels with a projecting moulding enriched with an acanthus leaf. The shallow chancel bay is divided into square coffered and enriched moulded panels, with smaller ribs enriched on soffit with a guilloche ornament; the mitres are covered with a circular rosette; and a similar acanthus rosette is planted in each of these coffered panels. The large, circular-headed window over chancel is surmounted with a moulded pediment supported by gracefully designed brackets, and further enriched with swags and cherubs' heads in full relief. The effect of the ceiling is somewhat spoilt by the painted "stencil"-work, very weak in character, added by a modern hand. The side aisles are groined in the square compartments into which they are divided by plain circular transverse ribs, springing on one side from the main Doric entablature, and on the other from moulded corbels, enriched with cherubs' heads and wings.

ST CLEMENT DANES (Figs. 365-367) was begun in 1680 and finished in 1682; it contains even more stucco-work than the most of Wren's London churches. The cartouche swag and cherub ornament over the arcading on each side of the nave appears too heavy, which may be due to the absence of the entablature and of the usual mouldings. The panel mouldings to the main vault also appear overdone in their enriched members; a striking example of the decoration that should not be. The curved panel over the chancel arch, with its conventional sprays of rose and thistle on each side of the royal coat-of-arms, is in a somewhat earlier style.

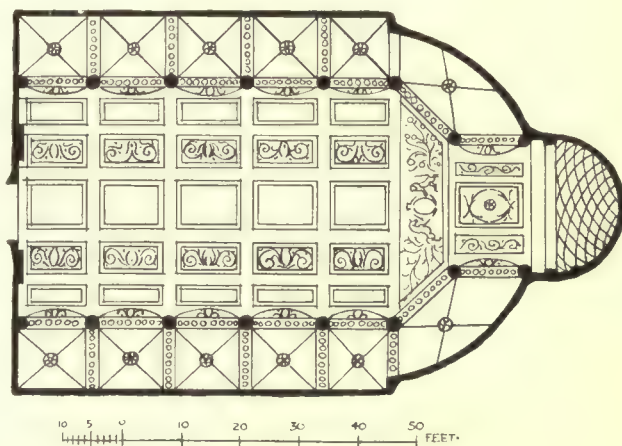


FIG. 365.—St Clement Danes.

The circular cove at the end wall over chancel shows the influence of a French architect, most probably Philibert de l'Orme.

ST ANNE AND ST AGNES, ALDERSGATE, was finished in 1680. The ceiling is composed of four vaults nearly semicircular in section, forming the arms of a Greek cross groined at their intersections with each other, over the central part of the church. The four square flat ceilings at each corner, which make out the square plan, each contain a circular band of enrichment enclosing a plain panel with ornamented spandrels.

The vaults spring from a finely detailed Corinthian order, which has in place of an entablature a modillioned, architrave cornice. Four flat ribs with square coffer panels, each containing a circular rosette on soffit, enclose the square groined portion of the ceiling; similar three-quarter ribs run over at the end of each vault against the wall between these ribs. On each arm of the cross the vault is panelled with





FIG. 366.—EAST END OF NAVE, CHURCH OF ST CLEMENT DANES, STRAND, W.C.



a heavily enriched husk ornament moulding, forming three panels, the centre one a little longer than the others.

ST PETER'S, CORNHILL, was finished in 1681. The plasterwork it contains is of a quieter and more severe type than that of most of churches.

It is divided longitudinally into a nave, with rather narrow aisles at the sides, which are (see sketch plan, Fig. 368) separated from each other by arcading between the piers; the soffit of the arcading is plain, with its arrises



FIG. 367.—Church of St Clement Danes.

enriched with a rather larger than usual husk ornament. A projecting key-block breaks into the enrichment, and connects the crown of each arcade, on the nave side, with the enriched cornice of the main Corinthian order; the three lower members of this cornice are returned round the key-block.

The elliptical barrel vault does not spring from the main cornice, as in most of the foregoing churches, but is supported by an Attic order which has a projecting pilaster, sunk panelled on face, over each pier. This Attic order has a



slightly projecting enriched cornice, and a plain moulded skirting, four flat transverse ribs divide the length of the ceiling, and 2-inch longitudinal ribs of similar section the width; their soffits are enriched with a flat double guilloche, with a rosette of acanthus leafage over each crossing. The five centre panels

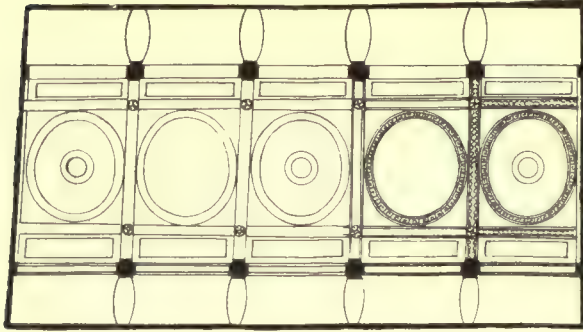


FIG. 368.—St Peter's, Cornhill.

ST ANTHOLIN, BUDGE ROW, was completed in 1682, but has unfortunately been demolished. Its ceiling was interesting, and consisted of an elliptical dome springing from a Composite entablature supported on eight columns. The central part of the dome was pierced by four circular windows, and the spaces between enriched with swag and fret ornaments. The aisle ceilings were flat, formed into panels with moulded beams crossing from each column to the angle of the walls.

ST AUGUSTINE AND ST FAITH.—One of Wren's smallest churches in London, built in 1682. Contains very little plasterwork of interest.

ST BENET, PAUL'S WHARF, built in 1683, is another small church, and nearly devoid of plaster ornament.

ST JAMES', PICCADILLY, finished in 1684, contains a very pleasing and dignified interior. The enrichment of the plasterwork is not too heavy. Somewhat severe in its detailing, it is restrained, and is confined chiefly to enriched soffits and mouldings.

The nave is ceiled with an elliptical barrel vault, crossed with flat enriched moulded ribs, springing from over each column (see sketch plan, Fig. 369), whose soffits are enriched with a double guilloche. Groins are formed in the lower part of the vault by the intersection of five barrel vaults on each side, running into it at right angles, which form the ceiling of the side aisles, the whole making a very pleasing arrangement. At each end of each of these aisle vaults, flat transverse ribs run over, enriched on their soffits with a similar double

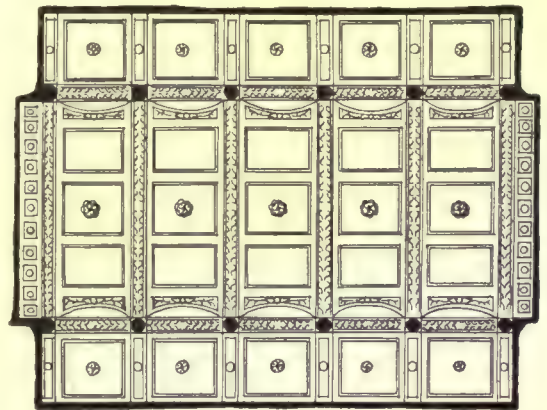


FIG. 369.—St James', Piccadilly.

guilloche ornament. Each of the five bays of the nave contains three nearly square and two narrow panels, whose lower sides take the curve of the groin with its delicately detailed enriched moulding, and leafage worked over the mitres. The two narrow panels contain finely modelled winged cherubs' heads, from which are suspended swags, and drops of fruit, and flowers in full relief. The five central panels on the crown of the vault contain large circular acanthus rosettes of good design and modelling, and a smaller similar rosette planted in the centre of the aisle vaults, which are similarly panelled each with a single panel. A Corinthian column supports the whole, which has an enriched (not modillioned) cornice, plain frieze, and enriched architrave, running from the wall

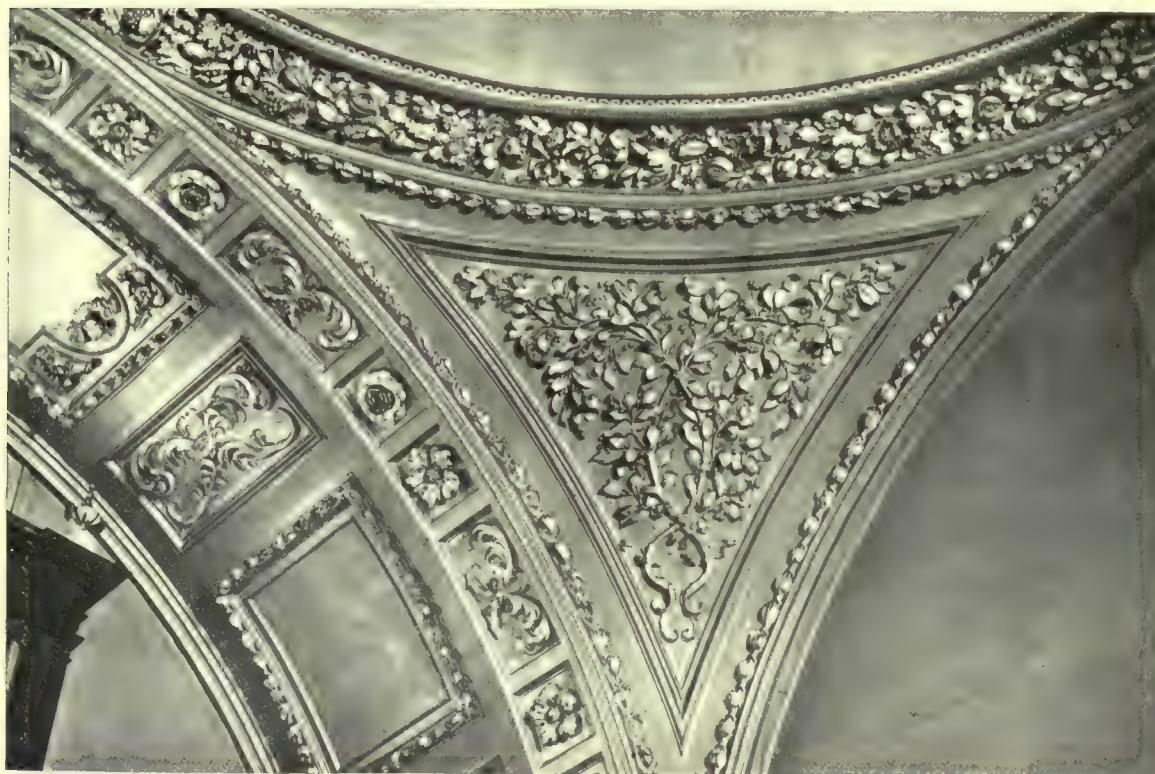


FIG. 370.—Pendentive and Arch, Church of St Mildred, Bread Street, E.C.

on each side of the beam dividing the nave vaults, and returning over each column. The Corinthian caps, which are of the orthodox pattern, are somewhat roughly finished; the ceilings over the recesses at each end of the nave retain the same section, but are richly coffered with square panels, each containing a vigorously modelled rosette, planted in the centre.

ALL HALLOWS THE GREAT, rebuilt in 1697. One of Wren's most characteristic churches, but unfortunately destroyed in 1893. The ceiling was fairly simple, and deeply coved all round the body of the church; the cove was groined by the intersection of four semicircular openings on each of the two sides, and three similar openings on each end; the end centre openings contained winged cherubs' heads,



and scrolled leafage in fairly high relief, over a smaller and further recessed semi-circular opening. The other openings contained wreaths of conventional foliage, the setting of which was of somewhat earlier period of stucco-work. The other main feature was a deeply enriched cornice whose soffit was enriched with deeply undercut acanthus foliage, loosely wound round a small circular stem, in a spiral manner; small whirling rosettes of acanthus leafage were planted on the flat of the ceiling, in the centre of which there were candelabra.

ST MILDRED, BREAD STREET (1683).—One of the smallest, and yet has one of the most interesting of these church ceilings, and is fortunate in not having had its original interior work interfered with.

The arch over the organ and pendentive is shown on Figs. 370, 371, the latter being somewhat distorted, though unavoidably, by the photograph. There is a

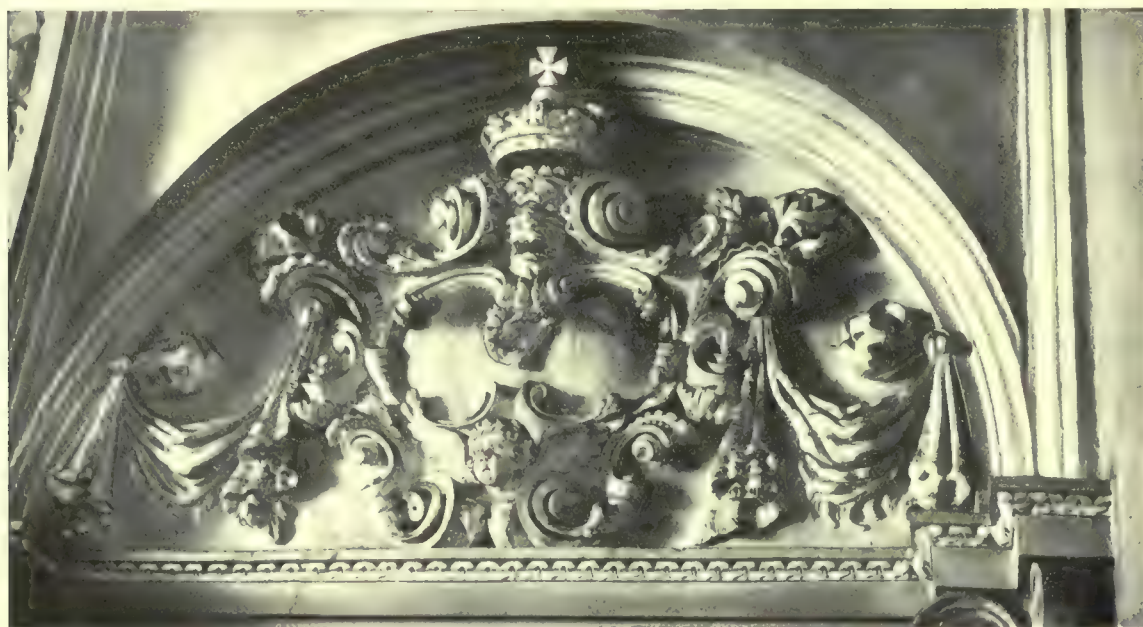


FIG. 371.—Detail of Arch Lunette, Chancel End, Church of St Mildred.

similar arch over the chancel, while on each side, owing to the church being rectangular, there is only a narrow flat rib. The four pendentives contain some interesting stucco-work, which shows that the earlier manner of working had not been abandoned entirely. Round the base of the saucer dome runs a deep band, moulded and enriched with fruit, leafage, and flowers in full and vigorous relief. The groups of cherubs in full relief at the top portion of the dome are less satisfactory. The panelled treatment of the two main arches at each end of the church are carefully proportioned, with satisfactory result; the arched openings at each springing contain an interesting shield or cartouche, vigorously modelled in high undercut relief, but are rather coarsely finished, like most of the plasterwork in this church.

ALL HALLOWS, BREAD STREET, built in 1684, which contained some plasterwork of interest, has been demolished.

ST MARTIN'S, LUDGATE, was rebuilt in 1684, and has a similar ceiling to that in St Anne and St Agnes. Where the lines of the groins meet over the centre portion of the church a large circular rosette of acanthus is planted, and a Composite order supports the vaulting.

ST BENET, GRACECHURCH, finished in 1685, was pulled down about thirty years ago, and contained what must have been an interesting groined plaster ceiling.

ST ALBAN, WOOD STREET, built in the Gothic manner, was finished in 1685, and although it contains plaster vaulting, it cannot be included amongst the characteristic work of this period.

ST MARY MAGDALEN, OLD FISH STREET, was also finished in the same year, but suffered destruction by fire about fifteen years ago. It contained a flat ceiling coved and groined. The central flat portion was surrounded by a deep enriched cornice, and a large circular rosette was planted in the centre of the ceiling.

ST MATTHEW, FRIDAY STREET, of the same date as these two, was one of his smallest churches. The little plasterwork in it is unimportant.

ST MARY, ABCHURCH, also of 1685, contains a beautiful decorated interior. The main portion of the church, which is circular, has a plain plaster dome, covered with allegorical paintings by Sir James Thornhill, the effect of which is somewhat marred by the stained glass in the four circular windows in it. A richly moulded and modillioned plaster cornice runs round the base of the dome; the four spandrel spaces thus left to make out the square are groined, springing from delicate modelled corbels similar in design to a Corinthian capital. The dome is 60 feet in diameter, and 65 feet high inside.

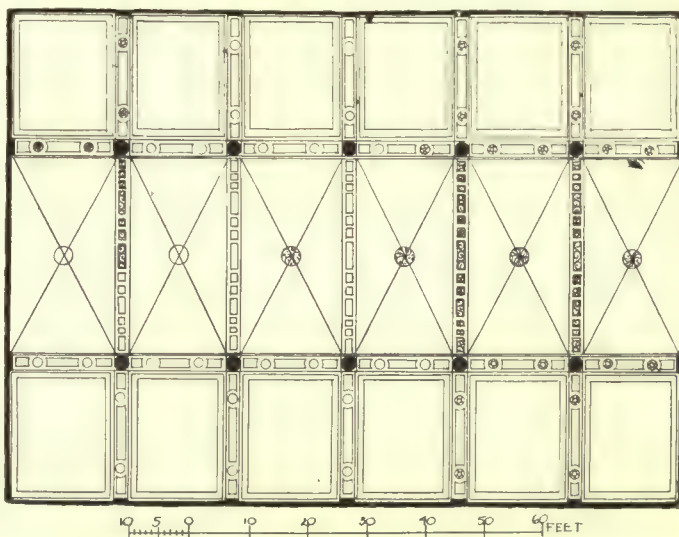


FIG. 372.—Christ Church, Newgate Street.

ST CLEMENT'S, EAST CHEAP, rebuilt by Wren in 1686, contains a fine ceiling, which has unfortunately fallen into the hands of the modern decorator, with the disastrous result of destroying its seventeenth-century character. The main feature of the ceiling is a large oval surrounded by a finely modelled enrichment.

ST ANDREW, HOLBORN, finished in 1687, is one of Wren's largest churches. The ceiling is very like that of St Clement Danes (Fig. 365), and a similar description would apply; it also has suffered at the hands of the modern "decorator," the ceiling being "stencilled" and painted in the usual absurd manner. The nave barrel vault is continued the whole length of the church; the portion over the altar being panelled in a rich and effective manner. The modelling is similar to that of St Clement Danes in the columns, caps, and enriched mouldings, but the swags and drops in





FIG. 373.—CHAPEL CEILING, BELTON HOUSE, GRANTHAM, LINCOLNSHIRE.



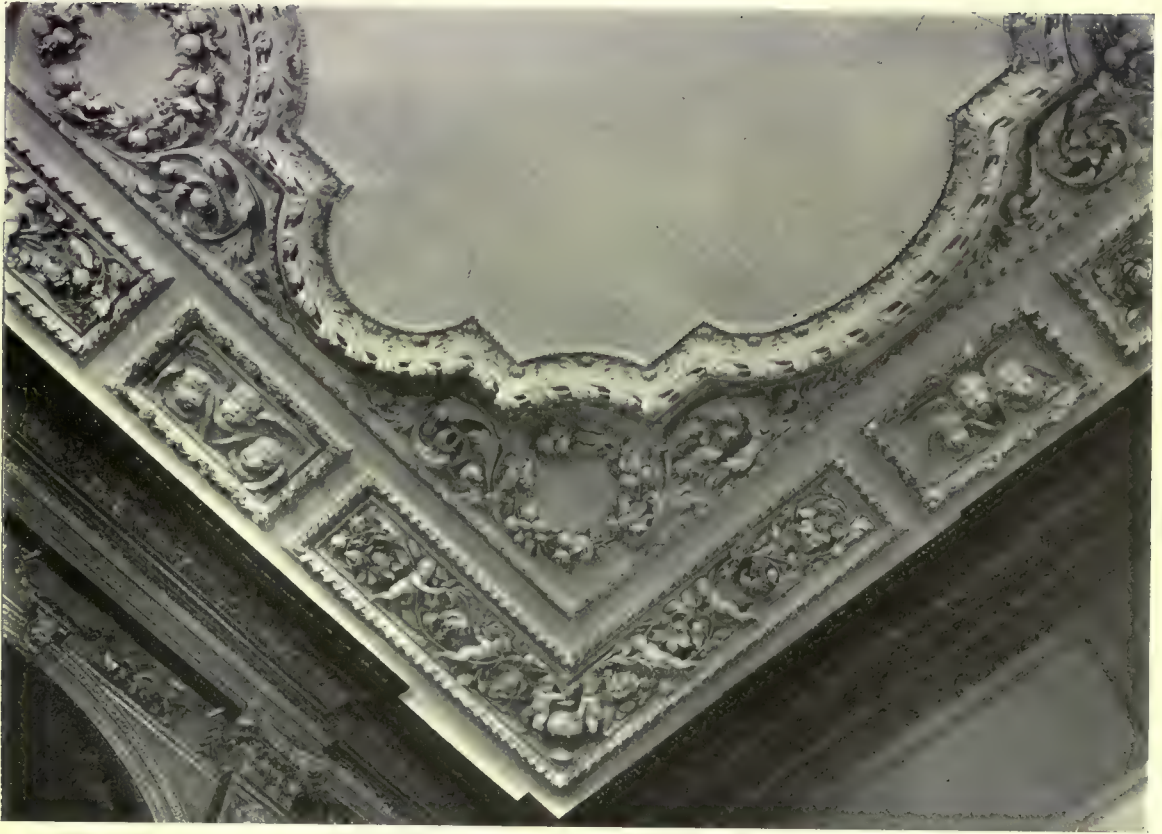


FIG. 374.—Detail of Chapel Ceiling, Belton House.



FIG. 375.—Portion of Organ Gallery Ceiling, Belton House.



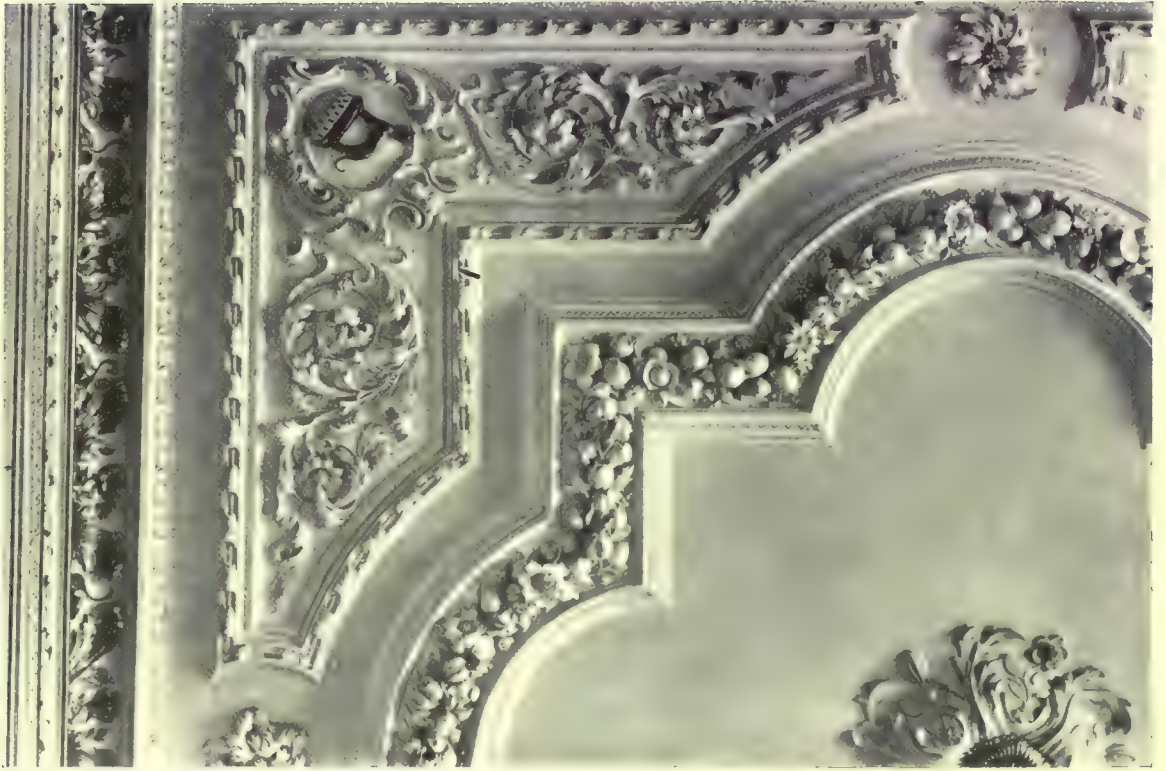


FIG. 376.—Part Plan of the Staircase Ceiling, Belton House.



FIG. 377.—Detail of the Staircase Ceiling, Belton House.



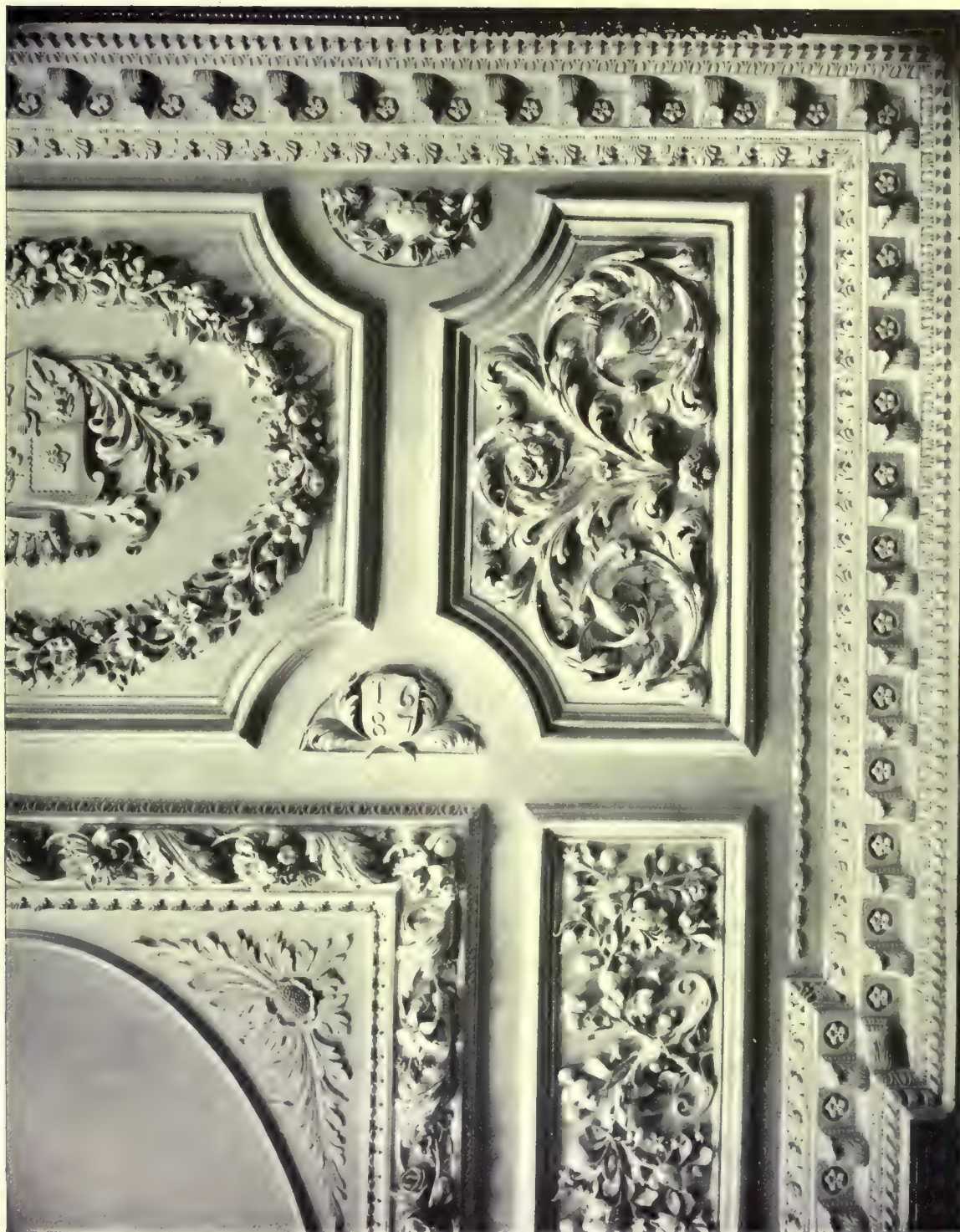


FIG. 378.—PLAN OF PART OF DRAWING-ROOM CEILING, MELTON CONSTABLE, NORFOLK.



the spandrels of the arcading are not so heavy, nor so deeply undercut, and are all the better for that. The panelling on the walls of the sacrarium is enriched with plaster mouldings, the detail of which is pleasing.

CHRIST CHURCH, NEWGATE, was built in the same year by Wren, who was not at his best in the interior (Fig. 372). The nave has a plain flat plaster vault, groined at the sides by the intersection of semicircular clerestory window openings. Springing from an architrave which forms the entablature of a composite order there are flat ribs, coffered on soffit, with square panels, filled with acanthus rosettes and leafage. The other plasterwork of interest is over the chancel and at each side

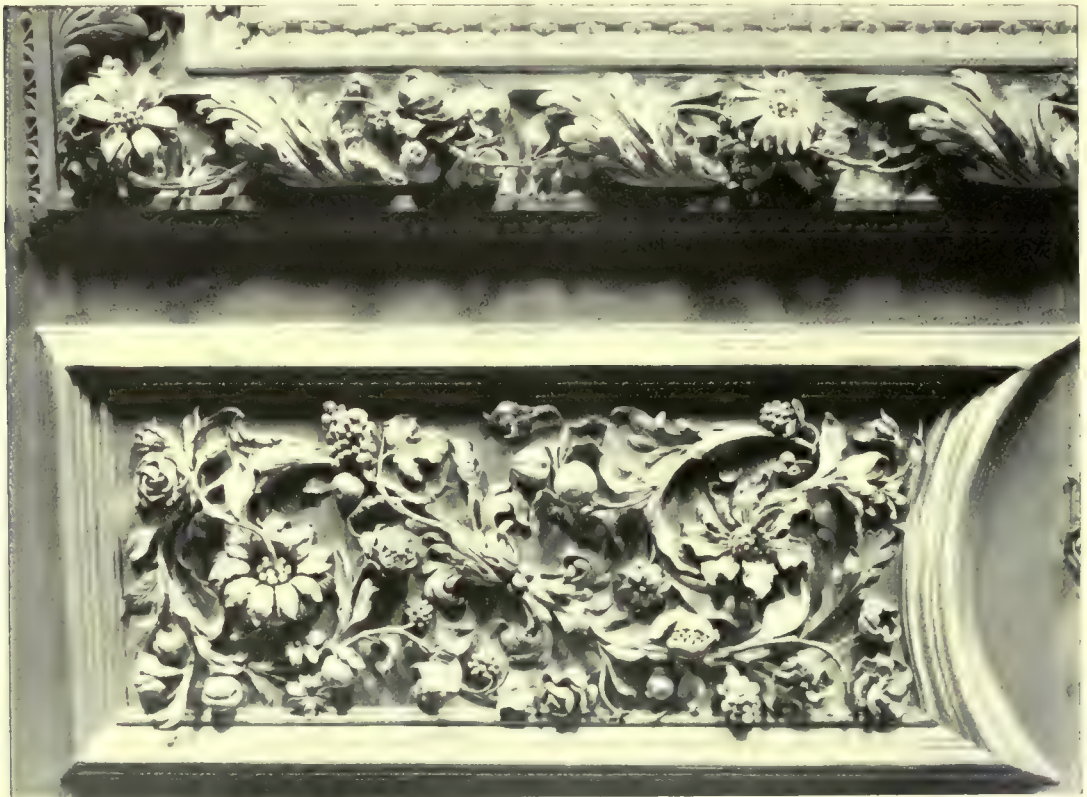


FIG. 379.—Detail of Drawing-room Ceiling, Melton Constable.

of the clerestory windows in the form of brackets, swags, and cherubs' winged heads, in not very high relief, which fill out the semicircular openings. The rosettes in the centre have been spoilt by the introduction of very ugly tubes with "sunburners."

ST MARGARET PATTENS, built in the same year, has a flat ceiling coved all round, and groined by the intersection of circular window openings. An enriched moulded band separates the flat portion of the ceiling from the cove, which springs from an entablature of the Corinthian order. The ceiling is 32 feet high.

ST EDMUND THE KING AND MARTYR, LOMBARD STREET, built 1690, and ST MARGARET'S, LOTHBURY, of the same year, contain similar ceilings to that of St Margaret Pattens. Wren's reason for repeating his designs at this time most



FIG. 380.—SALON CEILING, MELTON CONSTABLE.



probably was that he was fully occupied with the additions to Hampton Court Palace.

ST ANDREW WARDROBE, finished in 1692, has an interesting plaster ceiling.

ALL HALLOWS, LOMBARD STREET, has not much enriched plasterwork, but the arrangement of the plain surfaces is good. A moulded and enriched cornice encloses



FIG. 381.



FIG. 382.

Details of Panels, Salon Ceiling, Melton Constable.

the central space in which a modern skylight has been inserted; the groining surrounding this cornice springs from corbels of cherubs' heads supporting volutes, in full relief. The ceiling is 30 feet high. The church was finished in 1694.

ST MICHAEL'S PATERNOSTER, rebuilt in 1694, has a ceiling similar in most respects to All Hallows.

ST VEDAST FOSTER (1698) contains a ceiling to which the description of St

Margaret Pattens would apply. The cove is enriched with small panels of leafage, enclosed by a large outer panel, formed with bands of fruit and flowers, modelled in high relief.

ST MARY, ALDERMARY, built in 1697 in a Gothic manner. It contains imitation stone fan vaulting, and, excepting some finely modelled spandrel panels on either side of the nave, the plastering is unimportant.

HAMPTON COURT PALACE (1689-1718).—Wren was commissioned by William and Mary to design and carry out the present state apartments. Excepting for some enriched cornices, the ceilings of the chief apartments were coved, and painted by Verrio, an Italian.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL, commenced in 1696 by Wren. The plasterwork is chiefly confined to the completion of the order, as in the grand colonnade where the ceilings are coffered into plain, square compartments.

BELTON HOUSE, GRANTHAM, Lincs., built in 1689, generally attributed to Wren, contains some of the best specimens of the plasterwork of Grinling Gibbons' school. The accompanying figures (373-377) will show that the modelling is extremely good—those of the chapel (Figs. 373, 374) and great hall (Fig. 376) should be specially noticed here. The general setting of these ceilings is excellent, and with regard to their height none could suit the rooms which they occupy better.



FIG. 383.—Detail of Palm Panel, Salon Ceiling, Melton Constable.

The setting of the chapel ceiling and the great hall ceiling is particularly pleasing, and shows a careful study of the proportions of the enriched and plain surfaces.

MELTON CONSTABLE HOUSE, IN NORFOLK, also supposed to be Wren's, bears the date 1687 on the drawing-room ceiling, and has similarly excellent plasterwork in the various rooms. The modelling, if anything, is finer here than that at Belton House, although the architectural setting is hardly so good, perhaps.

As the comparison which could be drawn between ordinary modern ceilings and Grinling Gibbons' beautiful ones in this house might be thought odious, we refrain from making it here.

The drawing-room ceiling (Figs. 378, 379) is the most interesting.

The staircase ceiling is good. The enriched circular rib in the centre is deeply undercut; its soffit composed of acanthus leafage spirally entwining a central stem. Bound sprays crossed and tied with ribbon occupy the four semicircular panels



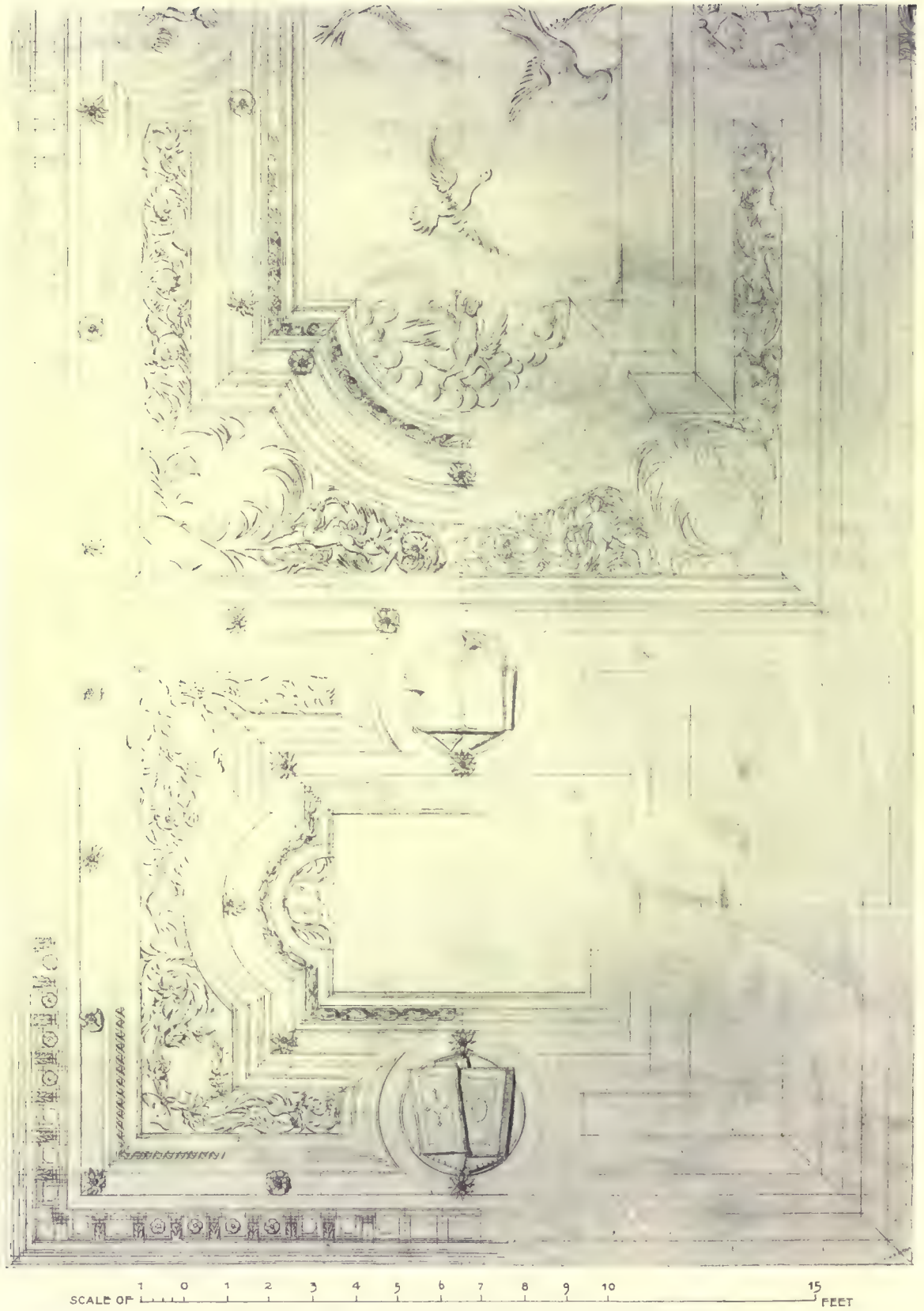


FIG. 384.—OLD LIBRARY, PEMBROKE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

*J. Stewart del.*



FIG. 385.—CEILING OF THE CHAPEL, TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.



adjoining. The four spandrel panels are filled with cartouches bearing the coat-of-arms, from which spring sprays of laurel and oak, in full relief, and quite clear from its ground in places. This portion now forms the central part of the staircase ceiling, but was probably at each end originally. An elliptical dome must have occupied the central position, with spandrel-shaped panels at each corner, filled with acanthus leafage of the same vigorous character as the rest of the work in this house. A moulded and coved cornice runs along each side. The cove is enriched with swags of fruit and flowers in full, vigorous relief.

The salon ceiling (Figs. 380-383) is less elaborate, and consists of a wagon vault



FIG. 386.—Detail of Cornice and Cove, Trinity College Chapel.

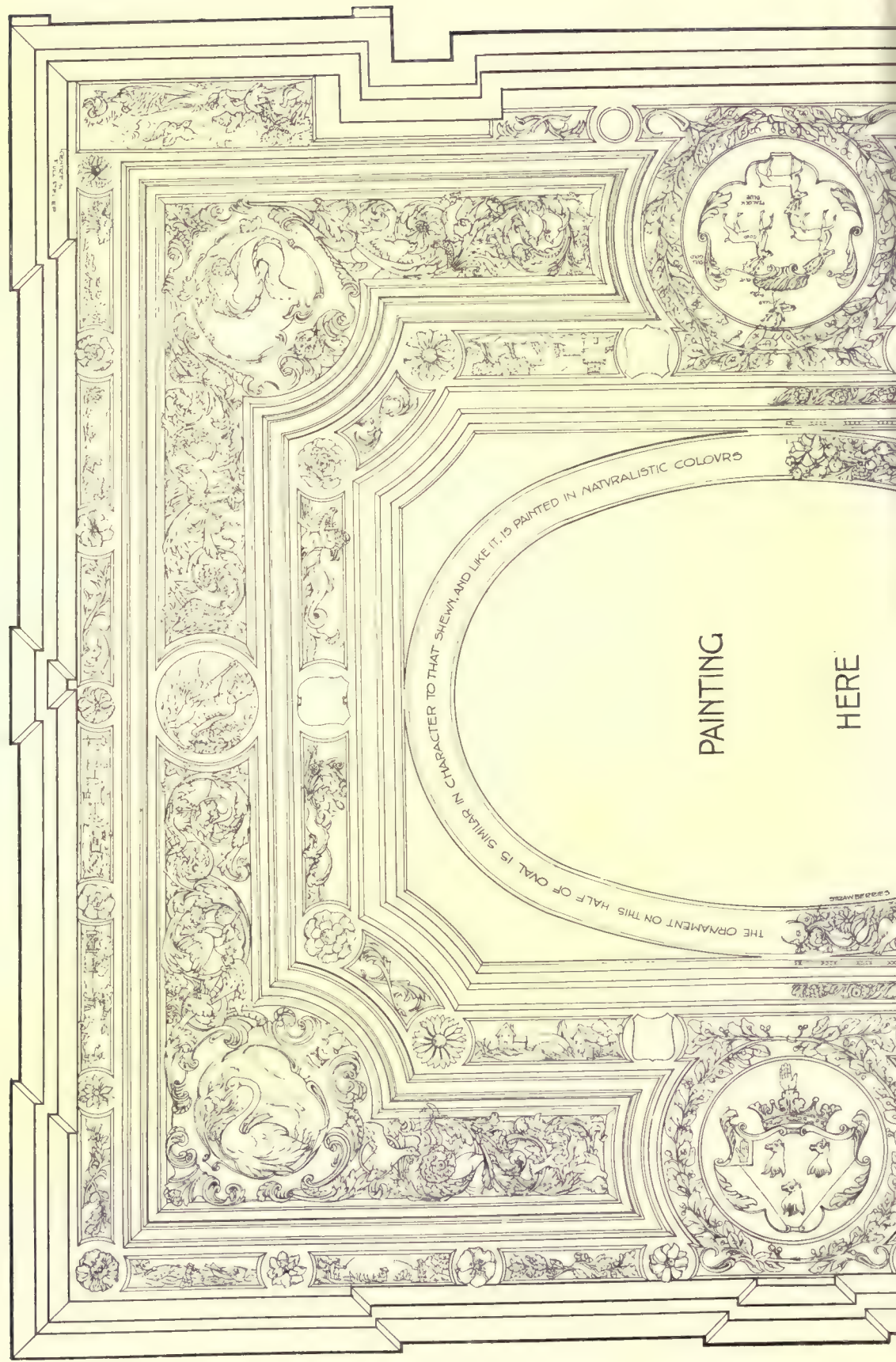
panelled with large square panels running down the centre, enclosed in a plain wide moulding. Each panel contains a large wreath composed of sprays of leaves in bunches of three, with small blossoms and berries between. The centre of the two end wreaths is occupied by heraldry in bold relief. The centre panel wreath contains two winged cherubs supporting a crown.

At one end of the salon a narrow rectangular panel is in line with the three central ones, and contains scrolled acanthus leafage, blossoms, and winged cherubs' heads in the centre, filling the panel.

The heavily moulded, narrow, rectangular panels (Figs. 381, 382) which make out the width of the ceiling on each side, contain crossed sprays of palm leafage,



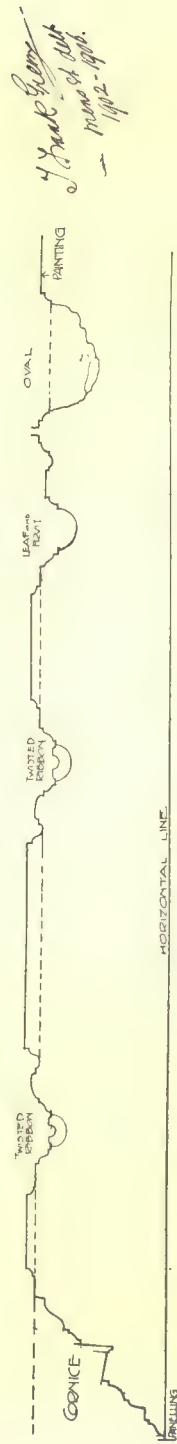
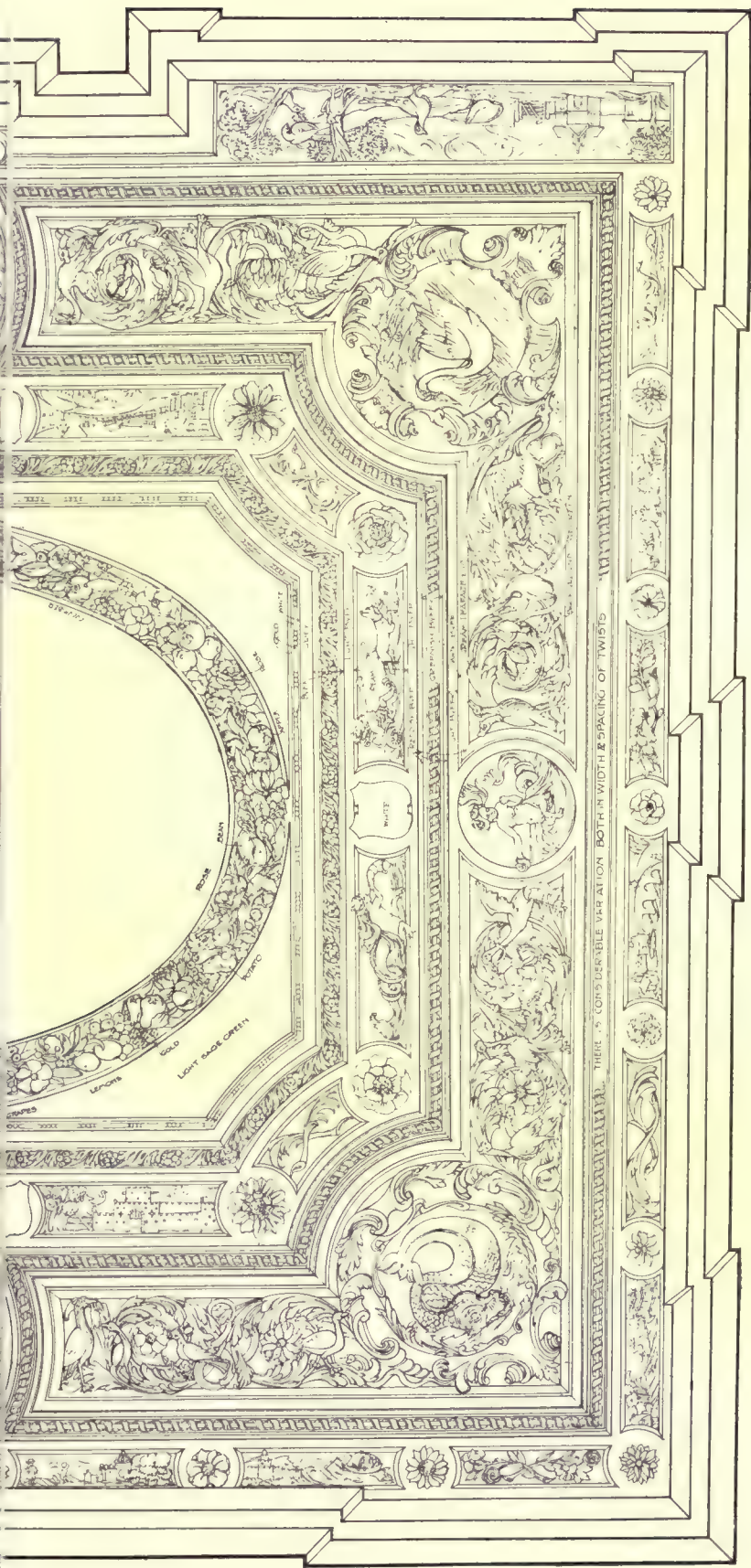




THE ORNAMENT ON THIS HALF OF OVAL IS SIMILAR IN CHARACTER TO THAT SHOWN, AND LIKE IT, IS PAINTED IN NATURALISTIC COLOURS

PAINTING

HERE



SECTION OF MOLDINGS OF CEILING  
TO TWICE THE SCALE OF PLAN

FIG. 387. — PLAN OF CEILING, NEW RIVER COMPANY'S OFFICES, LONDON.  
T. Frank Green del.







FIG. 388.—NEW RIVER COMPANY'S OFFICES, CLERKENWELL, LONDON, E.C.





FIG. 389.—PLAN OF PART OF CEILING, NEW RIVER COMPANY'S OFFICES.

alternating with crossed sprays of acanthus leafage, each with a winged cherub's head in the centre. A lunette at one end contains the Prince of Wales' feathers in the centre of swags, but is apparently of a later date. The vault springs from a small, leafed, enriched cornice.

PEMBROKE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE (1690).—A particularly fine ceiling of this period is in the old library, a dated drawing of which is shown on Fig. 384. The mouldings are fairly flat, and the enrichment well modelled. Some of the features are reminiscent of the work by Inigo Jones at Coleshill. The plain and modelled surfaces are managed with good effect.

TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL, OXFORD, built by Wren in 1667.—The ceiling is coved on all sides springing from a cornice, enriched in its large cavetto member with acanthus leafage and emblems, a favourite type of cornice with this architect. This ceiling is not so happy in its execution as others of Wren's, the modelling being inclined to be coarse and heavy. (The mouldings have since had some of their



FIG. 390.—Detail of a Side Panel, New River Company's Offices.

members coloured, which tend to make the ceiling seem heavier than it is really.) (Figs. 385, 386.)

The cartouche ornament round the wall shows a Jacobean spirit, with a treatment of sprays of foliage, softly modelled in low relief.

The ceilings of HOLME LACEY, HEREFORDSHIRE, built for Lord Chesterfield, are attributed to Gibbons, or his school. They are rather over elaborate, but well set architecturally. The modelling is of the same character, and apparently by the same hands as Melton Constable and Belton House.

BOARD ROOM, NEW RIVER COMPANY'S OFFICES, LONDON.—A very elaborate ceiling of this period, but of a rather rococo type. Figs. 387-391 show the ceiling in general view and in detail. The modelling is coarse in finish, and too heavy for the height of the room. A painted panel occupies the central space. The wide enriched band, of about 5 feet, reaching to each corner, but broken by a circular panel at each centre, in which is a large vigorous cartouche, contains vigorously



modelled and deeply undercut acanthus leafage, rosettes, and birds, in full relief. The inner band of this wide belt contains quaintly modelled panels, some of landscapes, and mermaids and Tritons, the detail of which is rather out of scale with the vigorous modelling. The small centre panels at each end of the belt contain the effigy of Father Neptune, and a Triton boldly modelled. In the centre of the two sides are the arms of the company enclosed in a wreath.

In the recesses on each side are rather quaintly modelled landscape panels in low relief. The upper members of the cornice of the room are in plaster of unusual arrangement. The modelling of the ornament of this ceiling is not brought to such a fine degree of finish as that of the three foregoing examples.

GROOMBRIDGE PLACE, KENT, contains in its drawing-room one of the most



FIG. 391.—Detail of Portion of Ceiling, New River Company's Office.

satisfactory domestic ceilings of this period. The enrichment is of just sufficient prominence, carefully modelled, and admirably distributed. It has been attributed to the same hand as that of the Church of St Charles the Martyr, at Tunbridge Wells, but the Groombridge work is apparently later, the modelling being more refined. A pleasing feature of this ceiling is the centre oval band of enrichment. (See Fig. 392.) The fruit, flowers, and leafage are in large clusters, instead of running in a continuous band, with low relief enrichment between (Fig. 393).

In Figs. 393A and 393B are illustrated two ceilings from the staircase of "Rampyndene," Burwash; the soffit panel of the doorway of this house, dated 1699, is illustrated in Fig. 105. The plan of the ceilings are of a quite simple type, but the gracefully modelled detail is crisp and sharp.

BRICKWALL HOUSE, NORTHAM, SUSSEX, contains some of the most delicate stucco-work of this period. The drawing-room ceiling is shown on Fig. 394, and the enrichment is carried to a remarkably fine degree.

The house appears to be very little known. The late Mr J. F. Bentley drew the writer's attention to the ceilings; he spoke of the work as the finest he knew of its kind, and compared some of the enrichment to a film of gossamer. The architectural setting of the drawing-room ceiling is excellent. The centre panel is

enclosed by an enriched moulding ; some of the inner members breaking the corners in quadrant shapes which enclose cherubs' heads and wings. The enriched member of this moulding may be described as a crinkled ribbon wound spirally round a rod. The main rib of the ceiling is a square on plan, the sides breaking outward a short distance from each corner in a semi-ellipse. The semi-elliptical panel thus formed contains a vigorously modelled cartouche, with prominent spiral scrolls, and an overflowing cornucopia each side, somewhat French in feelings. The main rib on the inner side has a cast enriched moulding next the ground, and a cavetto



FIG. 392.—The Drawing-room Ceiling, Groombridge Place.

leaf-enrichment, with a shell over each mitre springing from a group of small mouldings. The soffit of the beam contains very delicately modelled enrichment round the central stems. Quite clear of the ground there are twigs of oak, the leaves of which are most real. A bow of ribbon ties the twigs, from which they grow in opposite directions. At the crown of each semi-ellipse, modelled to a similar naturalistic degree, all the work seems to be clear of the ground, and the twigs are doubtless formed of lead piping or wire.

The outer side of the ribs has an enrichment modelled upon it like that on



the soffit, but composed of fruit, flowers, &c., from which spring ears of wheat, and bunches of berries, standing quite clear on their single stems. The moulded panels which make out the square shape of the rooms contain at each corner a wreath of flowers and fruit treated in the same manner as that on the outer side of the beam, from which spring scrolls of lightly treated acanthus leafage, containing a bird, modelled in nearly full relief. In the centre of the larger scrolls, where these panel mouldings nearly touch each other (opposite the crown of the curve on the main ribs), a cartouche of similar type to those previously described is planted. A cornice with cast enrichments encloses the whole at the top of a flat cove which, had it been deeper, would have helped the ceiling to a great extent. This ceiling may be taken as an example of the extent to which work in stucco may be carried. The work, to be sure, is most skilful, and very refined in detail, but seems overdone all the same, and considering the size of the room, too heavy.

Another equally interesting ceiling in this house is over the staircase (Fig. 395). The plan at cornice level is a rectangle. The cornice is enriched with



FIG. 393.—Detail of Part of Central Oval, Groombridge Place.

small cast mouldings, and a larger leaf ornament modelled *in situ*. Flat triangular spandrel panels, at the level of the top member of the cornice, form an irregular octagonal opening. These panels contain scrolled acanthus leafage, of similar treatment to that in the drawing-room, and contain also tiny cherubs, and groups

of berries in the centre. The eight moulded panels (about 4 feet deep, sloping slightly inwards) reach from this level to a smaller irregular octagon. The arrises formed at the base of the lower octagon are covered by a similar enrichment to that on the outer side beam in the drawing-room. The two longer sloping panels on either side have a circular window opening in them, bounded by a vigorously modelled scrolled architrave, of French rococo design. The remainder of each panel is filled in on each side of the window with swags and drops of realistic fruit, flower and stem-work. The panels at each end of the octagon contain shields, with a coat-of-arms in relief (presumably of the family) supported on each side, and the delicately modelled "drops" of fruit and flowers which in panels we call the "filling." The four panels across the corners of the octagon contain sprays of palm and berried laurel, alternately in full relief, enclosing a crest. An elliptical dome springs from a cornice at the level of the top of the above-mentioned panels. This cornice (plain but for one cast enrichment) is enriched on its soffit with a spiral acanthus leaf, and clusters



FIG. 393A.—Staircase Ceiling, Rampyndene, Burwash, Sussex.



FIG. 393B.—Portion of Ceiling of First Floor Landing, Rampyndene, Burwash, Sussex.





FIG. 394.—The Drawing-room Ceiling, Brickwall House, Northiam.

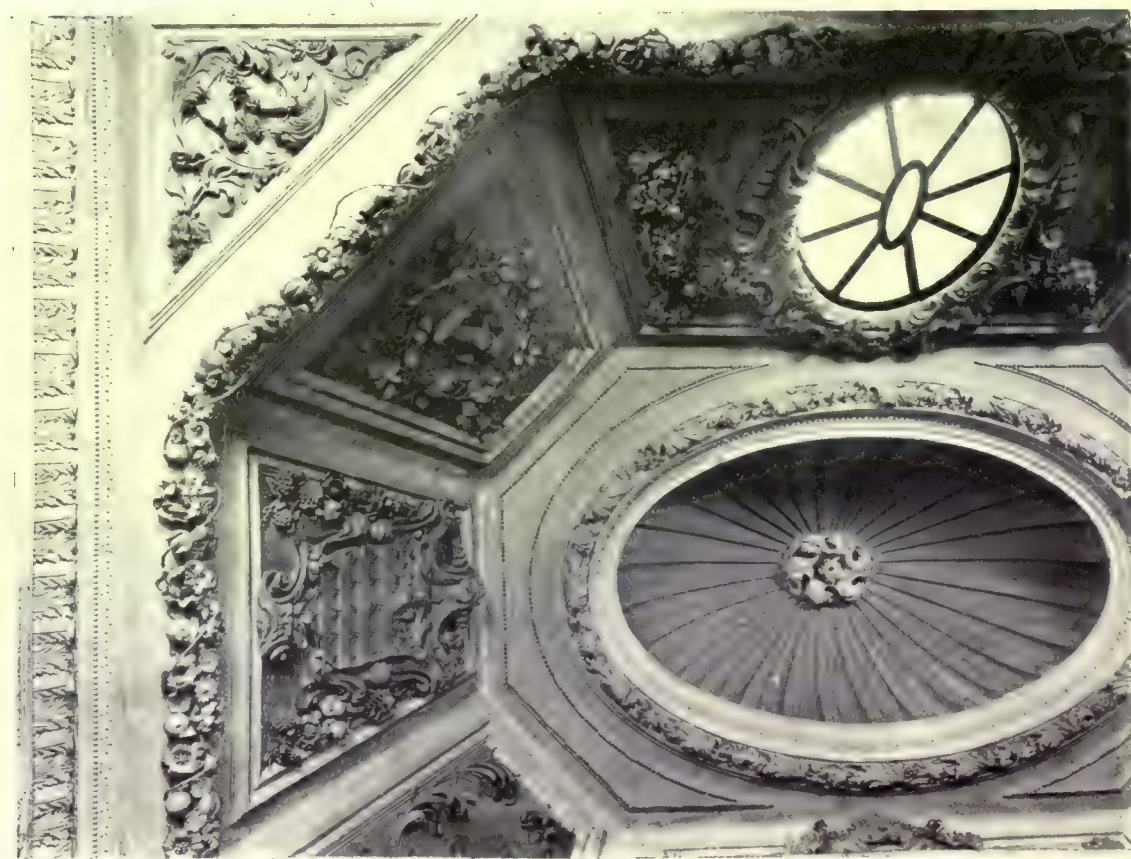


FIG. 395.—Ceiling over the Staircase, Brickwall House.



of fruit and flowers alternately, finely finished in full relief. Small horizontal, irregular-shaped spandrel panels, moulded with a bead-and-ball enrichment, make



FIG. 396.—Ceiling of Library, "Kingsley Room," Royal Hotel, Bideford, N. Devon.

out the space at each end to the octagonal shape. The elliptical dome has a fluted shell-like treatment running from a spinning centre flower of acanthus leafage almost to the cornice at base. The treatment of this ceiling is good,



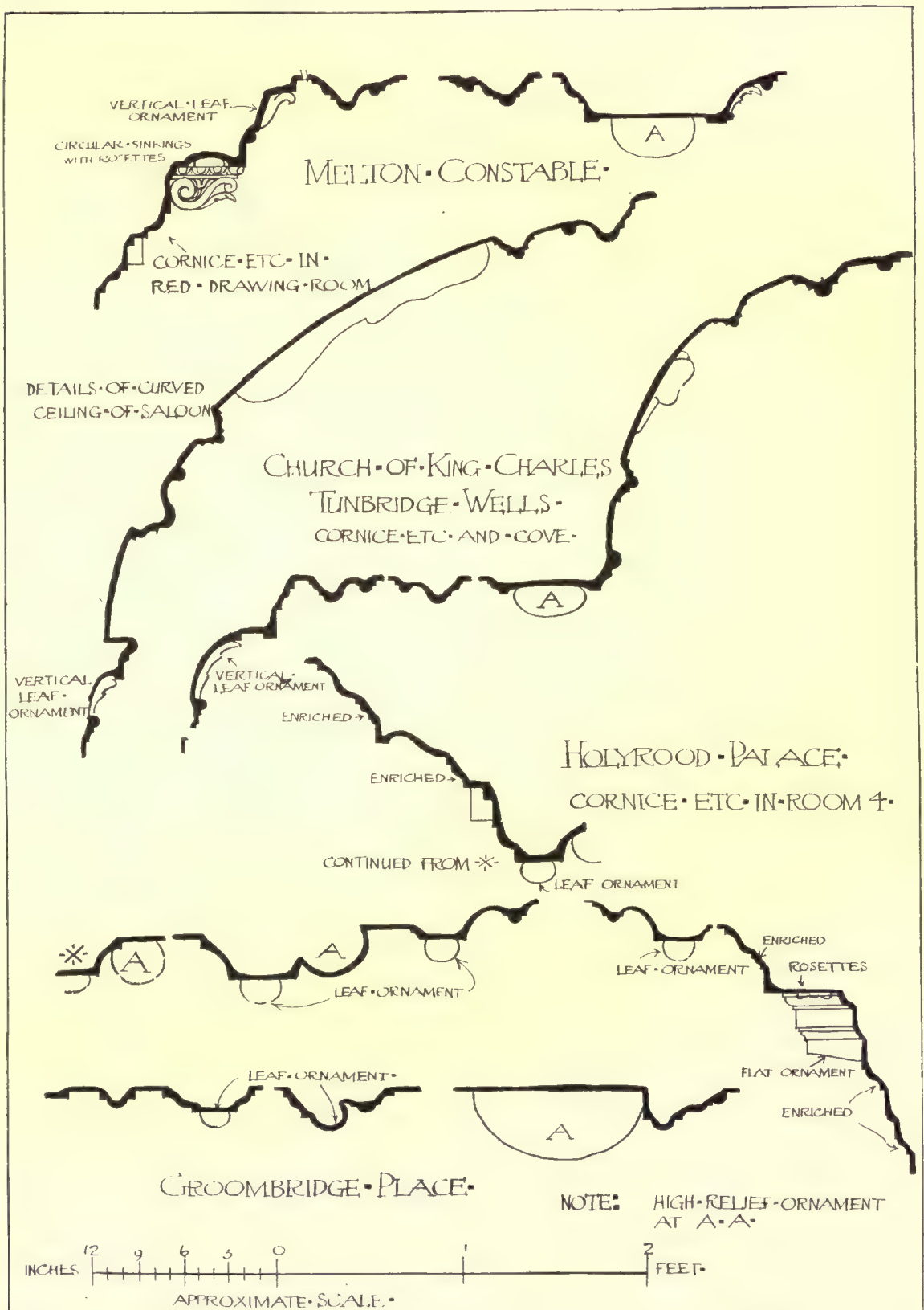


FIG. 397.—MOULDINGS OF LATER RENAISSANCE CEILINGS.

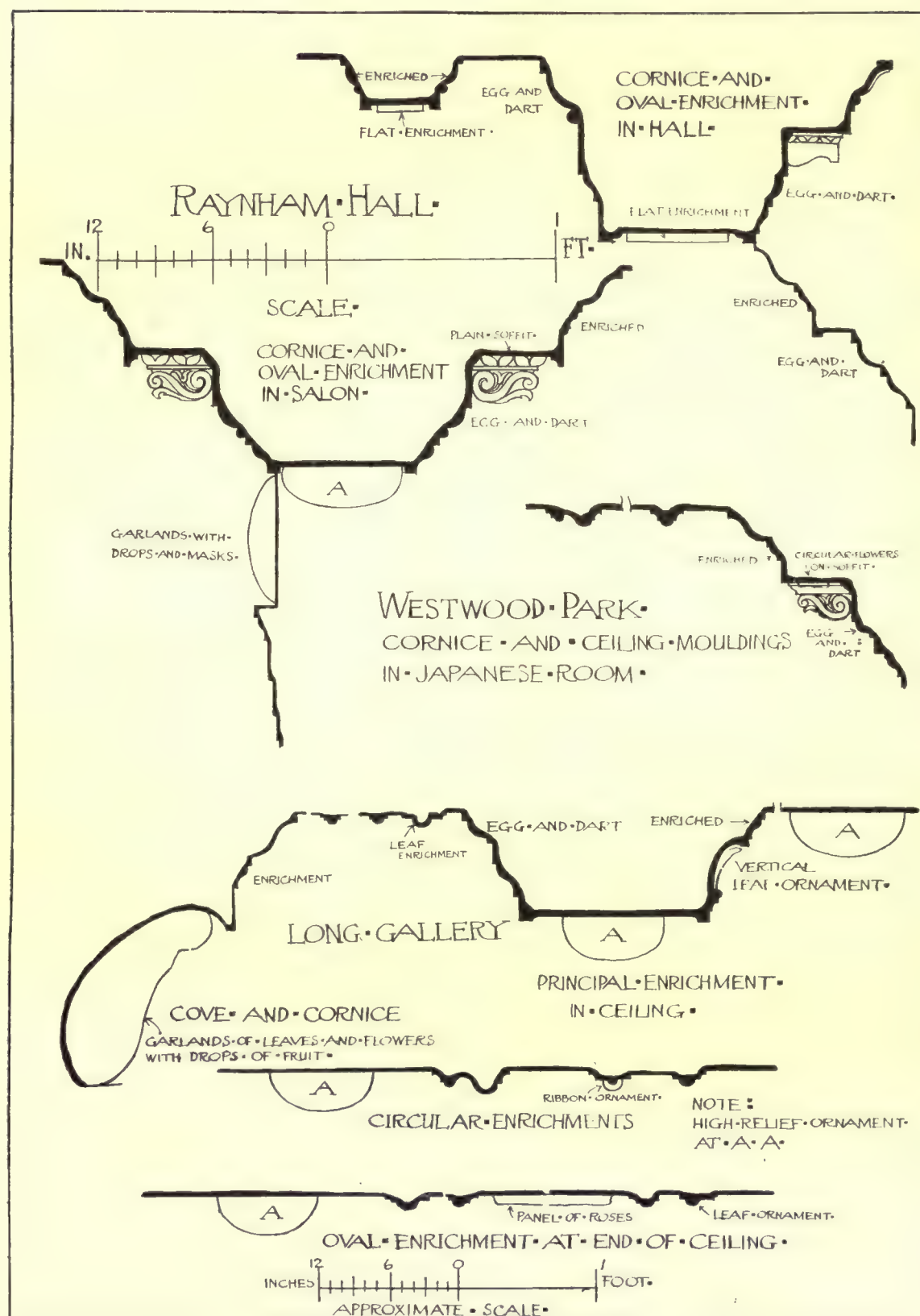


FIG. 398.—MOULDINGS OF LATER RENAISSANCE CEILINGS.



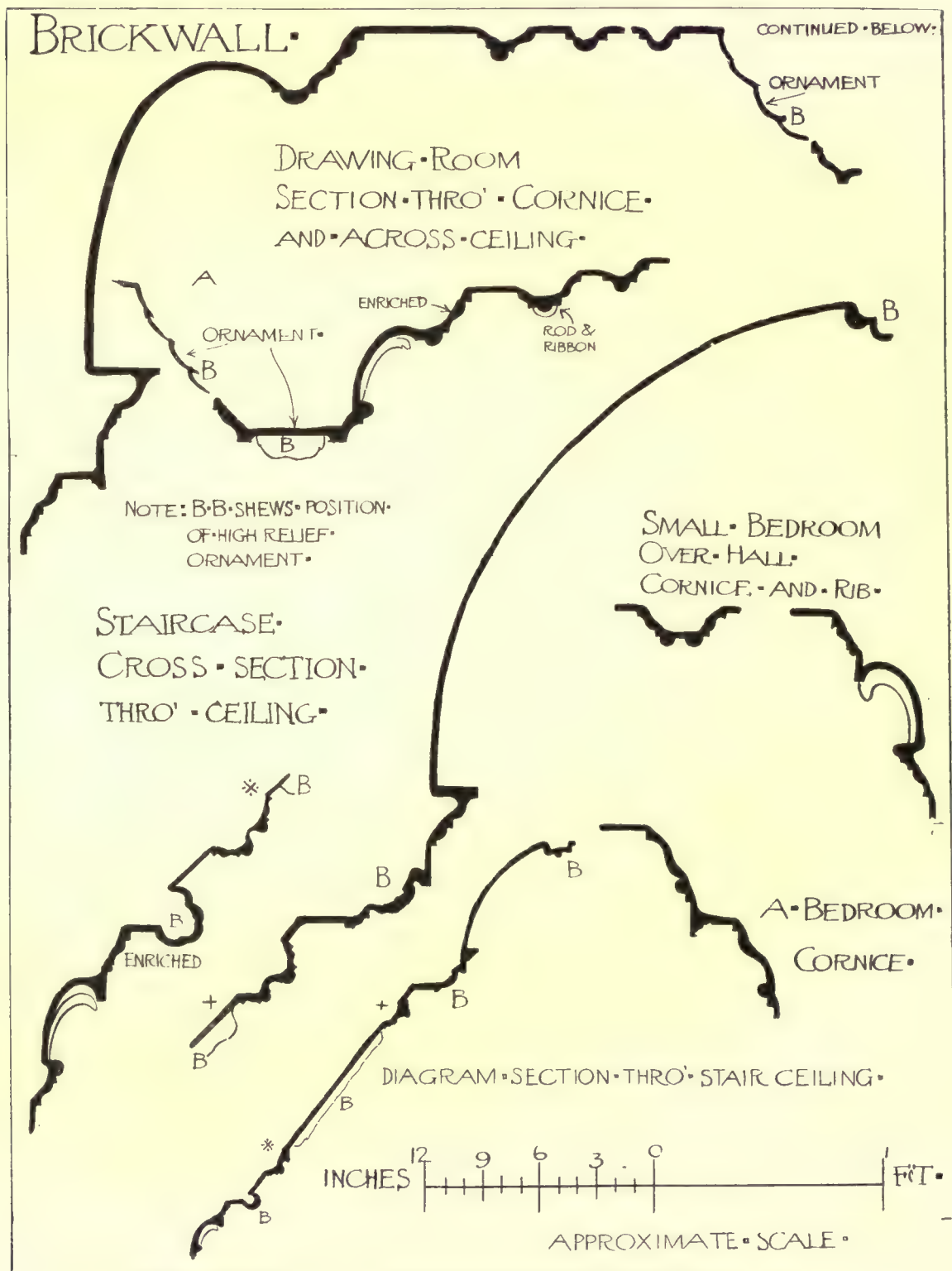


FIG. 399.—MOULDINGS FROM BRICKWALL, NORTHIAM, SUSSEX.

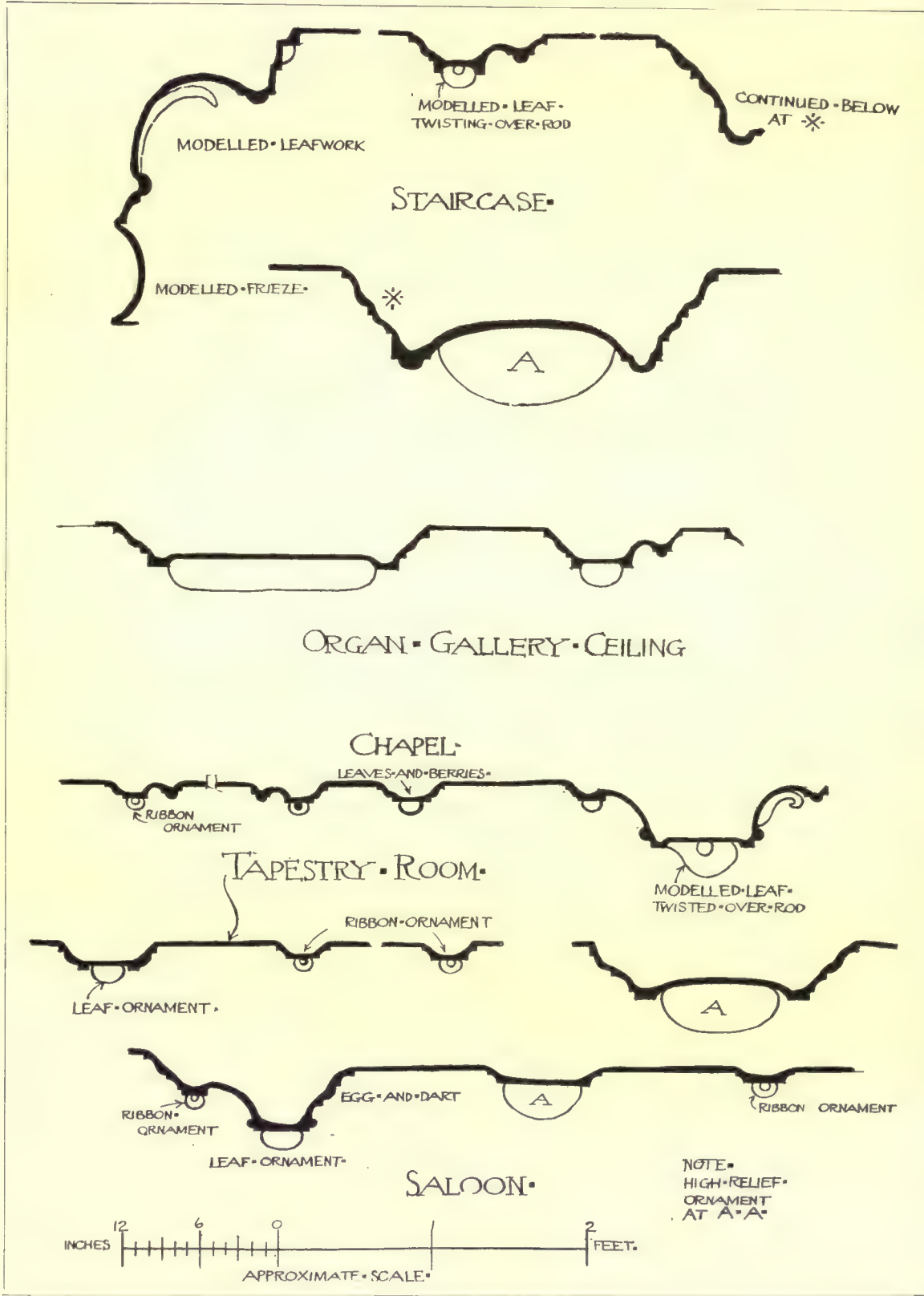


FIG. 400.—MOULDINGS FROM BELTON HOUSE, GRANTHAM.



and well worthy of repetition. The modelling is brought to the same degree of fineness as that in the drawing-room, with a very rich effect. The ceilings of the lobby at the top of the staircase, and the room adjoining, contain some interesting panels of scrolled acanthus leafage, in full relief, and have a good moulded treatment, enclosed by a similar cornice to that of the round staircase.

"KINGSLEY'S ROOM," ROYAL HOTEL, BIDEFORD, NORTH DEVON.—Another ceiling, which is carried to almost as fine a degree in its modelling, but apparently earlier than the foregoing. The setting of this is interesting and effectual (see Fig. 396). The enrichment of flower, fruit, and leafage which enclosed the centre panel is carried to a fine degree of *finish*. It has a slight limiting moulding round its inner side, and also has grotesque masks planted over the enrichment at each end of the room, opposite rosettes, while numbers of snakes, lizards, &c., are interspersed amongst the leafage and fruit. The four spandrel panels have a softly modelled cast enriched member, which contrasts well with the bold stucco modelling. A small inner moulding encloses the scrolled acanthus leafage in the panels, which springs from a central cartouche in each spandrel. Small cherubs and birds in full relief spring from the centre flower of the large scroll and disport themselves amongst this leafage. The acanthus tobacco-plant leafage (like the small circular rosettes at each end of the ceiling) is not so satisfactory in treatment as the rest of this piece of work, for it is mean in detail; it bristles with sharp spikes; and is also much undercut, standing clear of the ground in places. A band of enrichment, moulded on each side, encloses the whole of the ceiling's centre. It consists of continuous rows of bay leaves, running opposite ways from a central flower, with daisy-like flowers on thin stems similar to those on the ceiling in the salon at "Westwood Park." At the commencement of this enrichment, the leaves and blossoms are modelled in imitation of their early growth; but as they continue round the room they are made to appear older and older until they take the forms of leaves and blossoms beginning to wither, and so on until they reach the stage in which they are completely withered.

Other ceilings worth mentioning are those at DUNSTER CASTLE, NORTH SOMERSETSHIRE, where the detail is similar to the Melton Constable work; EUSTON HALL, SUFFOLK; BARRINGTON HALL, OXFORDSHIRE—all of this date, or nearly, and STANSTED HOUSE, SUSSEX (1687). In the last was an interesting frieze representing life-sized cherubs, but it was unfortunately damaged by fire a few years ago.

Four typical sheets of mouldings and sections embodying the enrichments of this particular period are shown in Figs. 397-400, and are given together in this order expressly for comparison.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DEGENERATION.

AFTER Wren's death all English plasterwork deteriorated rapidly. Grinling Gibbons, besides being employed by Sir Christopher Wren, is said to have carried out work at Chatsworth House, built in 1681 by William Talman, architect, and at Blenheim under Sir John Vanbrugh, who also employed other plasterers whose work is very much inferior to that of Gibbons; rococo is the word for it. That at Castle Howard, built in 1702-14, bears a very strong resemblance to fifteenth-century French work (Henri Deux). Inasmuch as they imitated Gibbons, they only drew attention to their inferiority. They were wont to enrich their cornices, friezes, and architraves in every possible member with lifeless and meaningless ornaments, which show a distinct decline from the similar features in Wren's work, where the enriched members were carefully disposed with such good effect.

With the advent of William III., who restored peace to the country, Italian workmen who had been in France renewed their visits to England, and the fashion of the French Court (Louis XIV. and XV.) became the style of the day. The English stucco-worker mastered it in his English way, but his work was less delicate in detail and clumsily handled. So great was the vogue of it that the architect Ware, writing in 1756, thought it was time to state his objections to it. "A ceiling," he said, "straggled over with arched lines, and twisted lines and tangled lines, and X's, and C's, and tangled semicircles, may please the light eye of the French, who seldom carry their observation further than a casual glance. The French have furnished us with an abundance of fanciful decorations for these purposes little less barbarous than Gothic."

Hawksmoor, who died 1736, James Gibbs in 1754, William Kent, Henry Flitcroft, Giacomo Leoni, James Archer, Colin Campbell, William Wakefield, Ripley, and James, coming after Wren and Vanbrugh, were contemporary architects, during whose time the art was declining rapidly.

The ornament used by Kent and Campbell was usually purely mechanical, and utterly devoid of any distinctive character. They were mainly employed in calculating to a nicety the proportion of the orders they used. Every feature was detailed by a scale of modules. Books containing the proportion of the orders, and details of these mechanical enrichments, were within reach of every plasterworker, and nothing more slavish has ever been seen than the docility with which their instructions were carried out. Some of these books explained even the methods by which various curved ornaments should be struck; gave also the scale of proportions,



and assisted by every means the repetition *ad infinitum* of identical office stock forms, without thinking it mattered whether the place of the object in question was to be 6 feet from the beholder or 60!

Hawksmoor, a pupil of Wren and Vanbrugh, continued the building of the fifty

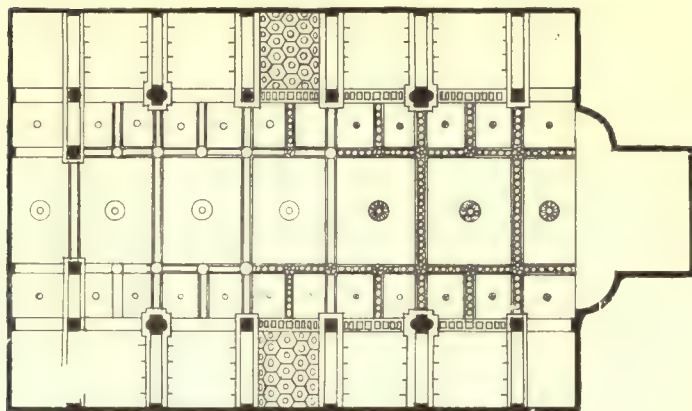


FIG. 401.—Christ Church, Spitalfields.

London churches still incomplete on the death of Wren; but his interiors are much inferior to those of his master.

CHRIST CHURCH, SPITALFIELDS, was commenced in 1715. The arrangement of the aisles is somewhat similar to that of St James', Piccadilly, but not so successful, nor is it so well proportioned. It has a crowded and heavy effect, and shows the influence of Vanbrugh. The enrichments have not the vigour of Grinling Gibbons, and are flat and mechanical. The flat ceiling over the nave is divided into square compartments (see plan, Fig. 401) by a deep moulded rib, each compartment containing a small centre rosette. The soffits of the ribs contain an interesting guilloche, with rosettes planted over the mitres. The treatment of the single barrel vault to each bay is the most interesting feature, the surface of each being covered with small hexagonal sunk panels, formed with slight narrow ribs, plain on soffit, and enriched at sides with egg-and-tongue. Each panel contains a rosette. These vaults have at the nave end of each, springing over each column, a flat rib, panelled on soffit, with small square panels, each containing a rosette. The architraves to these ribs on the nave side have enriched mouldings and key-blocks of varying designs. The entablature and column caps from which the vaults spring are heavy and of the orthodox design.

The ceiling of the nave in ST GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY, built in 1720, like that of Christ Church, is flat, and has sunk enriched panels with deeply moulded ribs and a similar guilloche ornament on soffit. There is an enriched and moulded cornice, returned round the modelled key-blocks of the elliptical architrave to chancel and opposite arch, whose widest member contains a guilloche ornament. The interior of it is heavy.

ST MARY WOOLNETH, finished about the same time, contains about the most

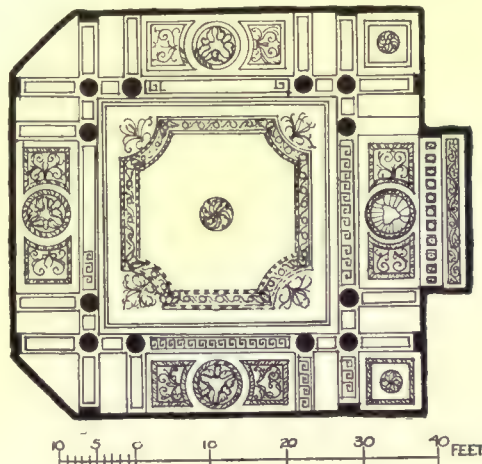


FIG. 402.—St Mary Woolnoth.

satisfactory of Hawksmoor's ceilings, but the details are heavy. A sketch plan is shown on Fig. 402. The centre portion is at considerably higher level than that of the surrounding. The enriched panels, like those in his other churches, lack vigour in detail. The pargetry has been bedizened in places by a modern decorator. If there was any idea of enhancing the effect of the work, it has not been realised here.

Hawksmoor was also engaged at Greenwich Hospital, where he altered the ceiling over the five central bays in the main colonnade from the heavy coffered treatment to a series of flat panels, each containing a circular acanthus rosette in the centre, and each formed by an enriched moulding. The whole is surrounded by a main cornice and cove, groined over each opening.

Examples of the revived Italian character will be found in Honington House, Warwickshire, and Easton Neston House, built by Hawksmoor about 1700. In the latter, the drawing-room ceiling contains a large oval modelled panel enclosed by a flat enriched moulding illustrating a mythological subject. The figures in it are nearly life size, and in good relief: four spandrel

panels at each corner are bounded by a small enriched moulding of a flat section, and contain wreaths, sprays, and trophies. At each end of this central rectangle is a semi-circular panel enclosed in a similar moulding, and containing trophies; on each side of the central panel are small central circles, filled with a rosette, between two narrow

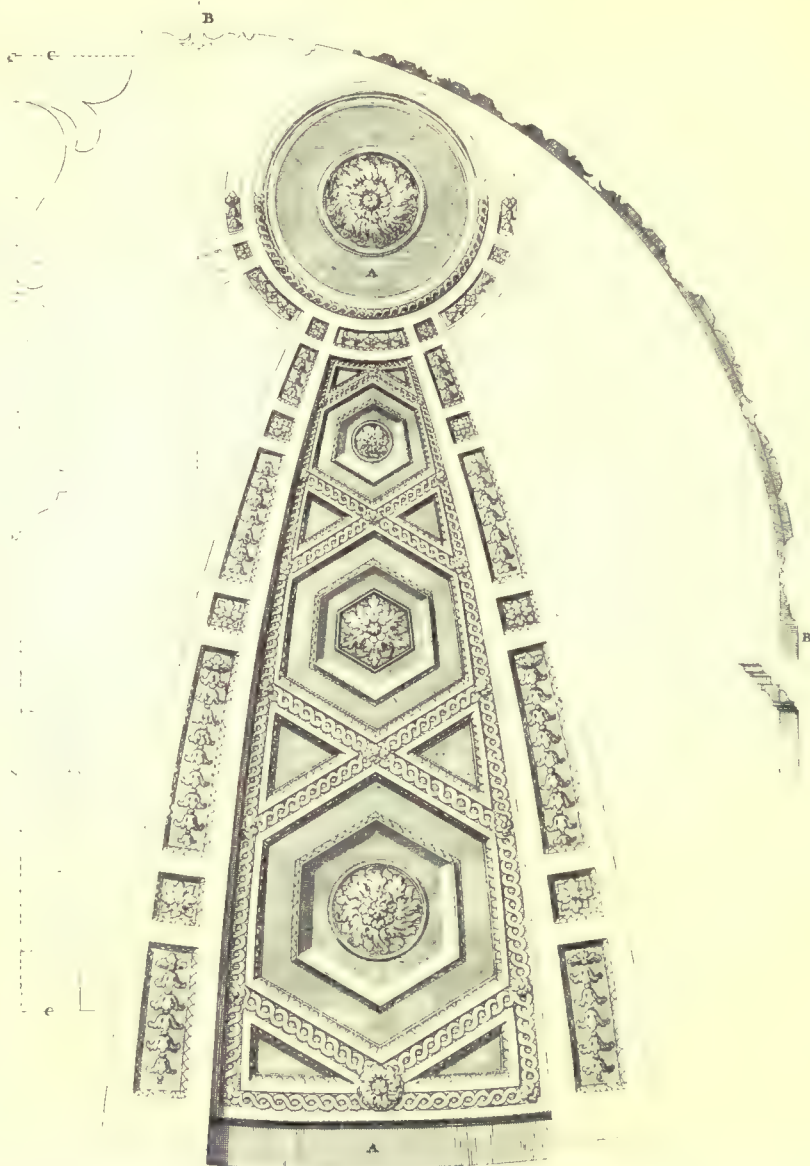


FIG. 403.—Compartment of Dome, Section and Mouldings, Radcliffe Library, Oxford.



rectangular panels, filled with scrolled leafage in low relief. The whole is enclosed by a cornice whose largest member is an enriched cavetto. The wall panels formed in plaster are of a grotesque design, and their restless character immediately arrests one's attention upon entering the room. The inner square moulding enclosing an oil painting is surrounded by an architrave moulding scrolled into volutes and leafage, brought to an ogee pediment at the top, surmounted by swags, drops, and trophies, all in modelled low relief in an affected manner. Honington Hall in Warwickshire contains similar work in its entrance hall, rather heavier in treatment, but none the less grotesque. The octagon room in this house contains an eight-sided dome in



FIG. 404.—View of Dome looking up, Radcliffe Library.

keeping whose ceiling has small octagonal panels, sunk and containing rosettes, with small square sunk panels between, but down each angle of the dome are bands of this meaningless ornament, and similar work is carried down each angle of the room.

James Gibbs studied in Holland and in Italy, but left his plasterwork chiefly in the hands of Bagutti and Artari, two Italians of whose work he seemed to have been proud, although it was of a very rococo character.

THE CHURCH AT ST MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS was one of the first of the churches Gibbs added to the fifty London churches left incomplete by Wren. Built in 1720-24, it contains some of the worst plasterwork to be found in any London

church. Looking at the imposing exterior, it would be natural to expect something better, but all is not as it should be in this best of possible worlds. The ceiling lends itself to a very satisfactory treatment; the nave is ceiled with an elliptical barrel vault, intersected with arches which spring from column to column, and divide the nave from the aisles. The aisle ceilings have saucer domes, supported on pendentives, similar to those in St Paul's Cathedral. The nave ceiling is divided into panels, with a strapwork of guilloche ornament, which at each crossing is carried round a circular rosette. The moulded panels inside the strapwork, therefore, have their cornice broken inwards. They are filled with coarsely modelled rococo ornament, which is not in character certainly, but which the modern decorator has found to his liking apparently. (The very fairly modelled Corinthian capitals and enriched cornice, although of the orthodox design, seem in their quiet refinement to rebuke the rest of the plasterwork.)

ST MARY-LE-STRAND, finished about the same time, also has some disappointing plasterwork. The nave ceiling is an elliptical barrel vault, groined at the intersection of circular window openings on each side, and divided up into small panels with ribs whose soffits are enriched with the then common mechanical guilloche.

The SENATE HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE, built by Gibbs in 1722, contains a heavy and unsatisfactory ceiling by Artari. Both that and the work between the windows in the

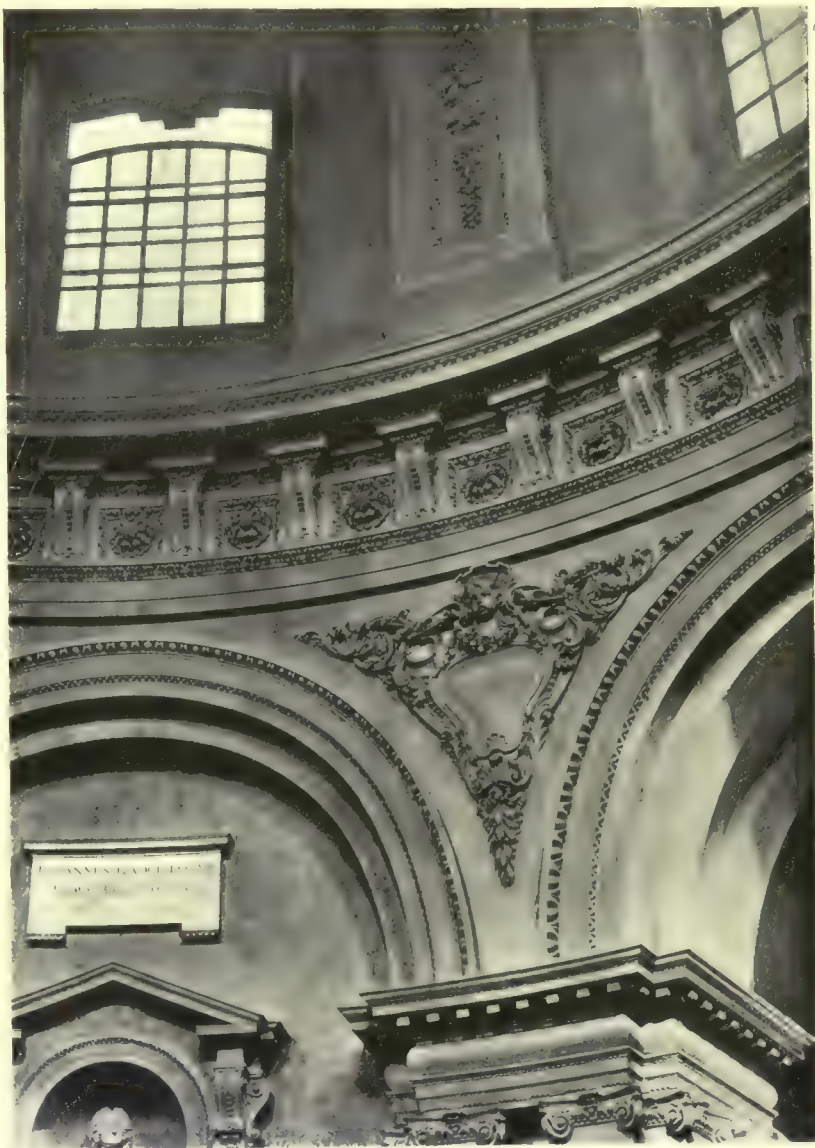


FIG. 405.—Detail of Pendentive, &c., of the Dome, Radcliffe Library.



gallery floor is out of proportion, and bears no relation to the excellent woodwork of the galleries, &c., below. The ceiling is divided into a number of alternately square and rectangular panels by moulded ribs whose soffit contains the usual guilloche ornament. The panels contain some modelling of an interesting rococo type: the cornice soffit is supported by console brackets, which are not related to any part of the building, and apparently quite unnecessary. The wall panel is not

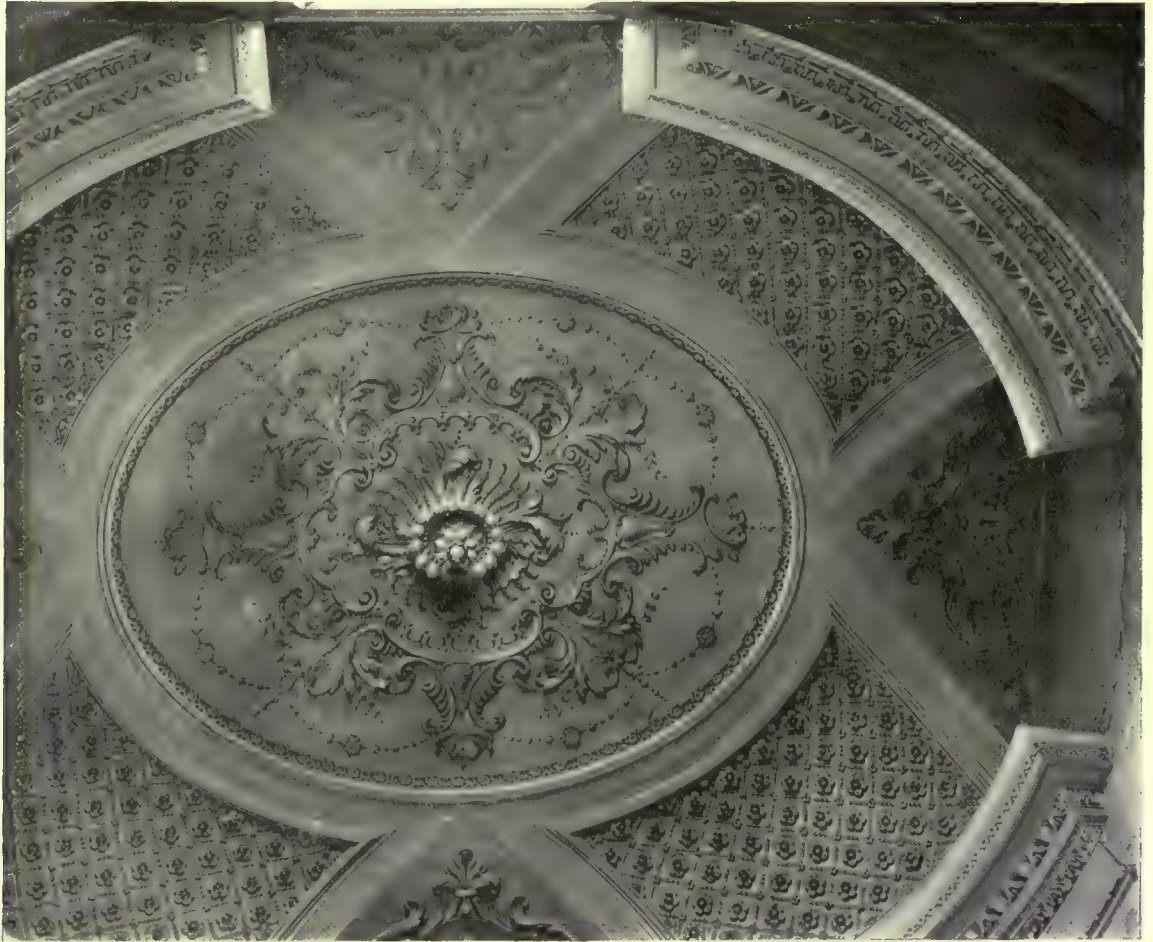


FIG. 406.—Ceiling of the Staircase, Radcliffe Library.

unlike the Louis XV. work at Dijon, and the Italians probably based their work upon this French decoration, but with not such successful result.

The plasterwork in the RADCLIFFE LIBRARY, OXFORD (Figs. 403-405), built by Gibbs (1737-47), is more satisfactory than most of the other work by these Italians. The cast enriched moulding and column caps, most likely detailed by Gibbs, are good of their kind, but the spandrels between the main arches show the rococo influence. The circular rosettes between each console in the main cornice are apparently all cast from one mould, and are monotonous, lacking the interest which the variety lends to

Wren's work, in which similar features were nearly all of different design. Fig. 406 shows the staircase ceiling.

The work of these two Italian plasterers marks a stage in the decline of the English plasterwork. It has scarcely a redeeming feature as "plasterwork," and it is difficult to see what Gibbs, whose style was based upon Wren's, can have seen to admire in their work; for in that there is none of the careful distribution of modelled and plain surfaces which is so pronounced in Wren's.

William Kent, who practised as an architect from 1719 till his death in 1748, was a painter originally. Before taking to architecture he painted the ceilings at Houghton House, Norfolk, Kensington Palace, Stowe House, Castle Howard, and others, in a very indifferent manner. When taken up by Lord Burlington, he speedily came into favour. Unlike his contemporaries generally, he paid great attention to detail, and produced the most successful ceilings of this period, although he used the mechanical and meaningless ornament, copied from the antique, then in vogue. The setting of his ceilings is interesting, and should be studied. Although Artari's name has been mentioned, he was undoubtedly the designer of the ceilings and chimney-pieces for his chief work, Houghton Hall. Holkham, Norfolk, he commenced in 1729; the Treasury Buildings, London, in 1734, and also Devonshire House, Piccadilly.

The ceilings at Holkham were carried out from Kent's designs, and others adapted from Inigo Jones' book, by Thomas Clarke of Westminster, and Mathew Bretingham, who acted as clerk of works, although he, as Gwilt says, "had the unparalleled assurance to send them to the world as his own," while speaking of the designs for this house. The enrichments are severe, and mostly copies from the antique, which was probably the wish of the Earl of Leicester, well known as a connoisseur, who had to be pleased in this matter. Illustrations of some of these ceilings are given in Figs. 407-422, and show admirably the type of work at this period.

Thomas Archer, a pupil of Vanbrugh's, shows the influence of his master in most of his work. The plasterwork in St Philip's Church, Birmingham, in 1710, and St John the Evangelist, Westminster, in 1721-28, consists chiefly of the completion of the order used in the interior, viz., the capital and entablature and moulded beams dividing the ceilings in a similar manner to Wren's, but without his vigorous treatment.

In 1741 he built Umberslade Hall, Warwickshire, which contains a ceiling as French in style, but not so refined and delicate as a French work would have been, and most probably executed by Germans.

This ceiling was almost the first of a kind which soon became very common.

Duncan Park, Yorkshire, finished in 1716 by William Wakefield, another of Vanbrugh's followers, contained some plasterwork in the rococo style of his master. The house was damaged by fire in 1789, and in more recent times there was a second fire, after which the plasterwork was renewed on the old lines.

Colin Campbell was at this time responsible for a great many palatial houses in different parts of the country. Burlington House, Piccadilly, was originally designed and built by this architect in 1717-18, but has, however, been considerably altered





FIG. 407.—HALL CEILING, HOLKHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK.

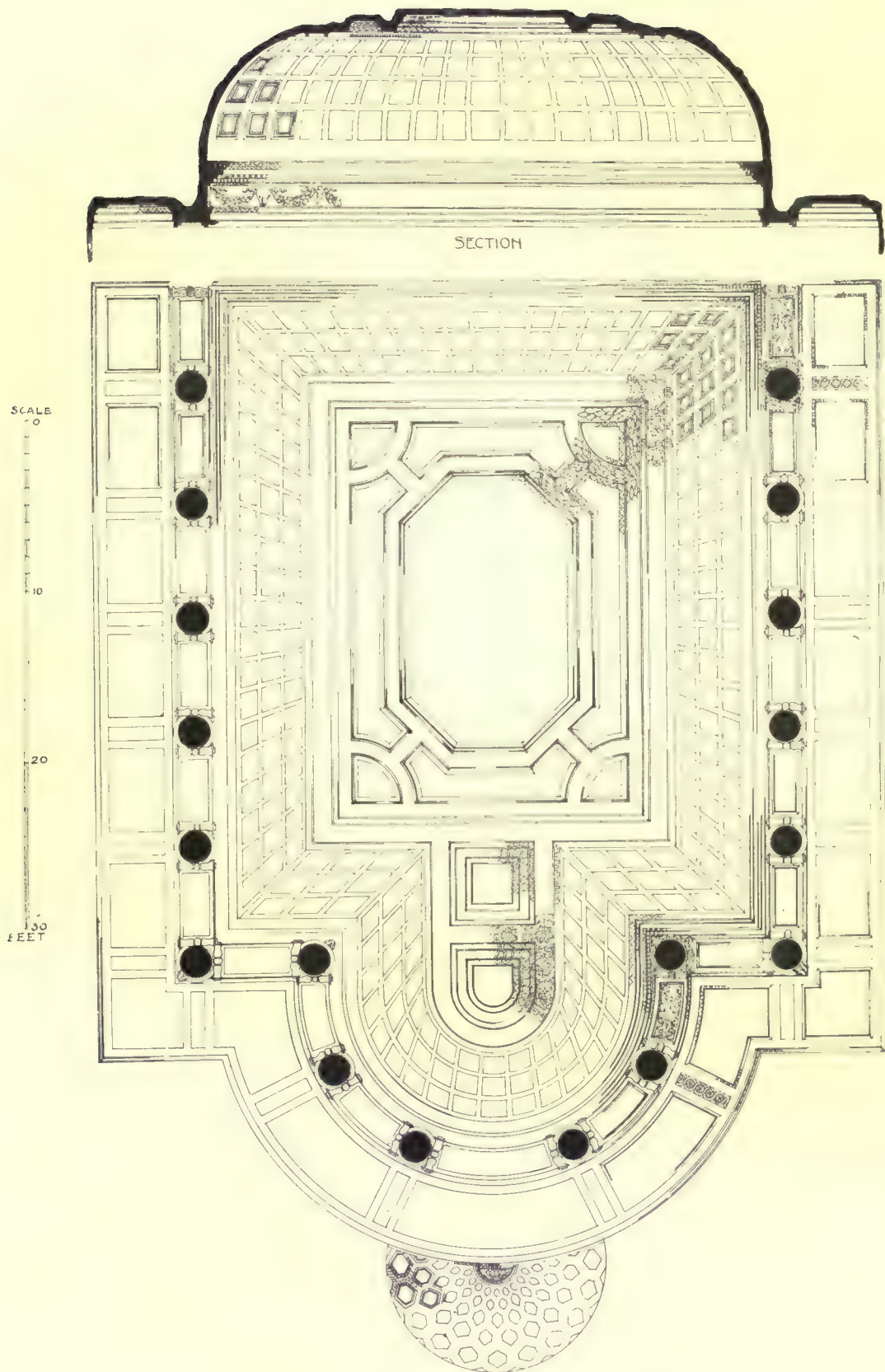
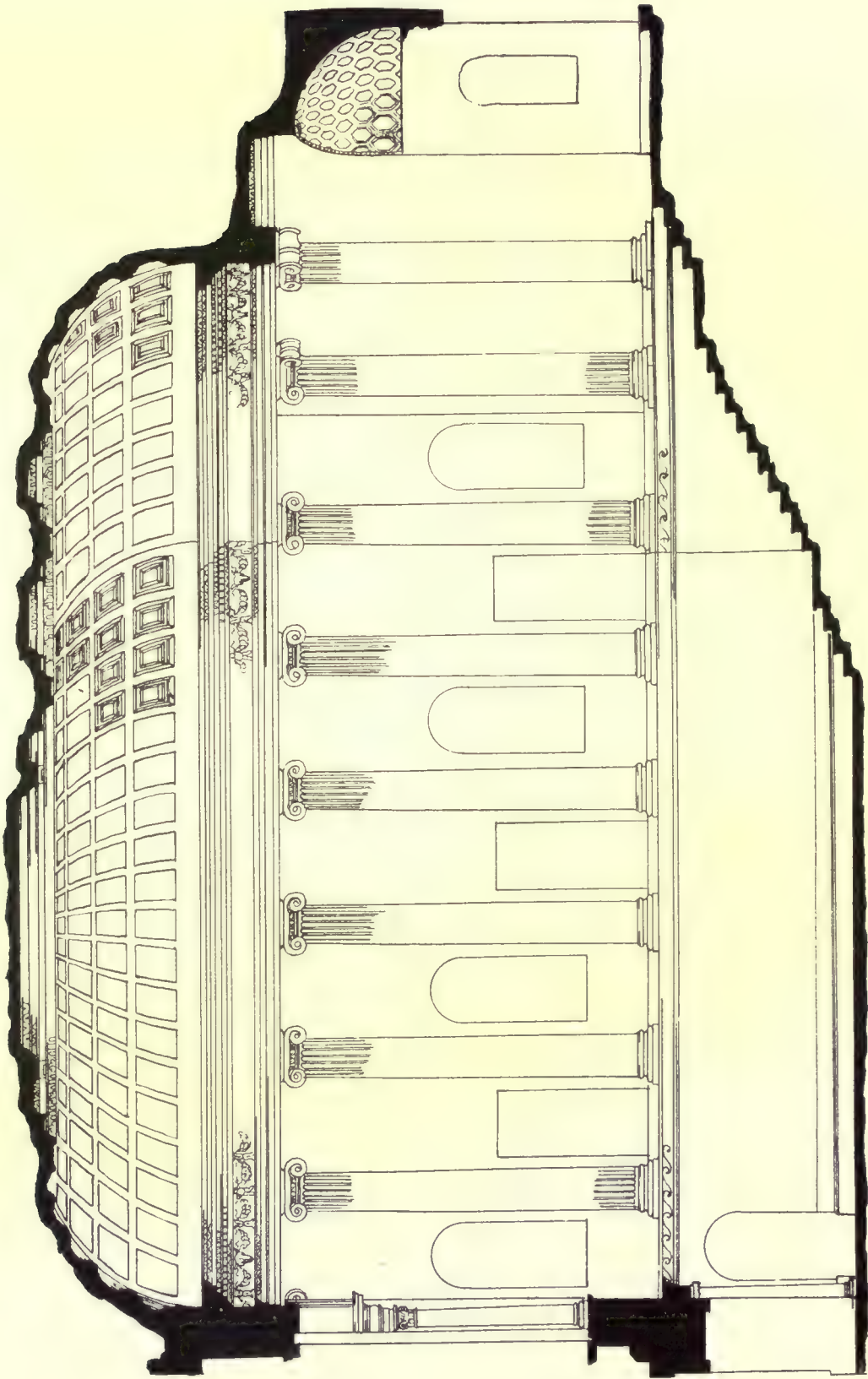


FIG. 408.—HALL CEILING, HOLKHAM HOUSE.





SCALE 0 10 20 30 40 FEET

FIG. 409.—TRANSVERSE SECTION THROUGH HALL, HOLKHAM HOUSE.

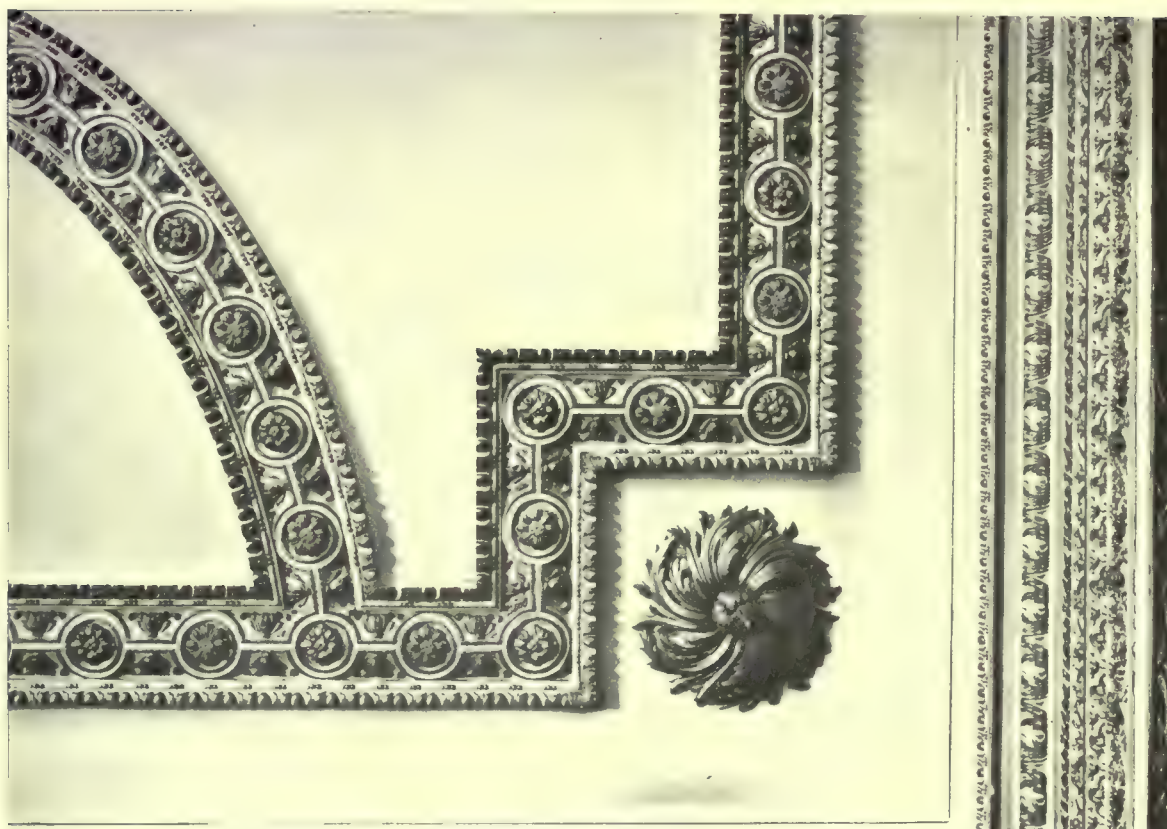


FIG. 411.

CEILING OF STATE BEDCHAMBER, HOLKHAM HOUSE.

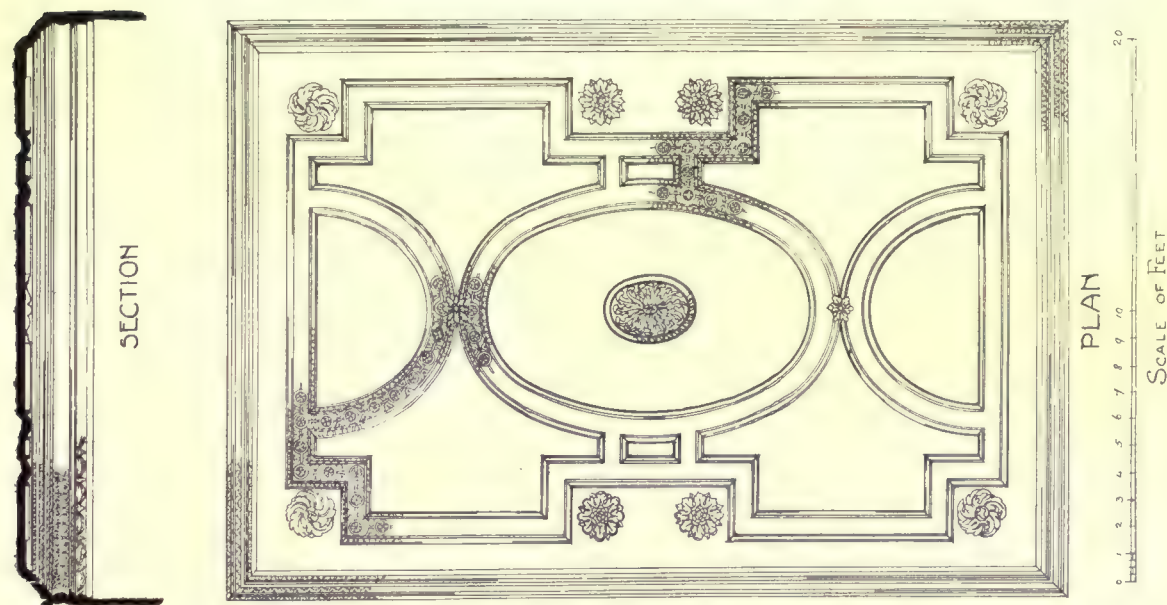


FIG. 410.



and turned about from time to time since. The plasterwork was by Kent, and of its kind is good. That in the state ballroom has an interesting arrangement. The room is coved by an enriched and modillioned cornice, modelled frieze, and enriched moulded architrave. At the top of the cove is a deeply enriched moulded rib running all round the room, with deeper mouldings on the inner side, thus raising the main ceiling to a higher level than that of the top of the cove. The ceiling, which is very much longer than its width, has, on its flat portion, ribs of a similar section, forming a series of octagonal panels whose diameters are the width of the flat portion of the ceiling. The sides of each octagonal panel are parallel to and formed by the rib at the top of the cove, and the sides square to this rib in each octagon are joined with

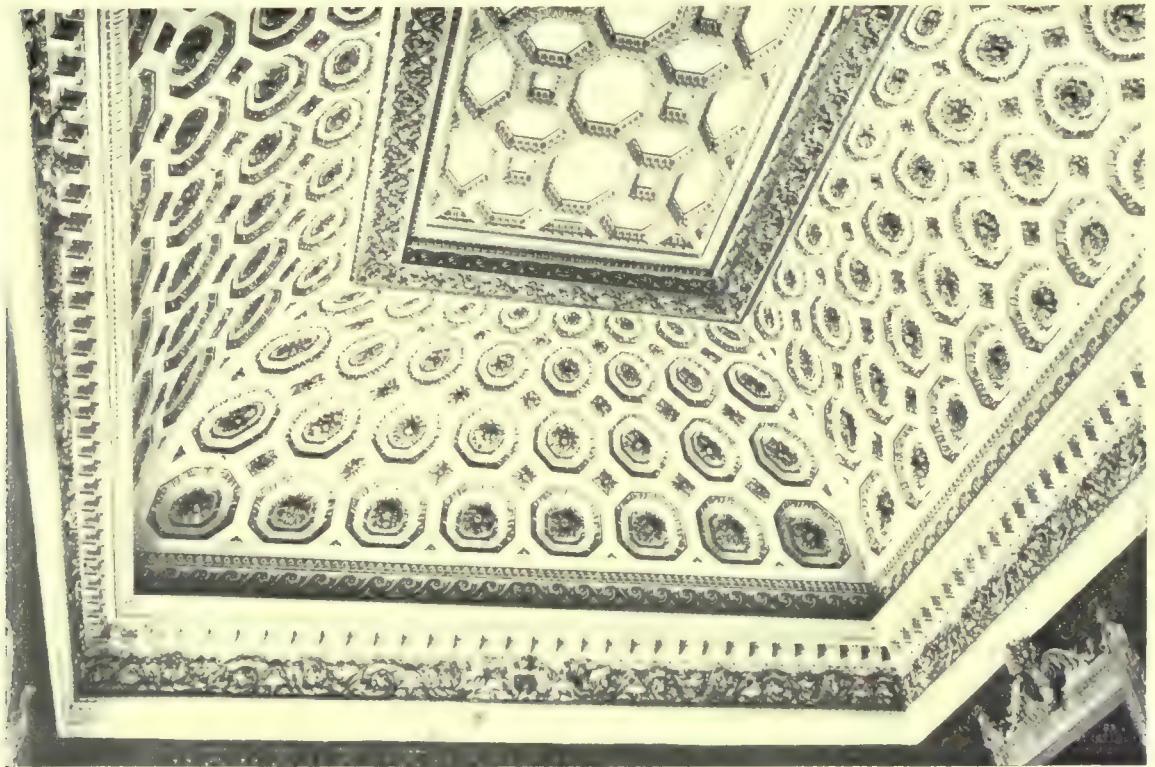
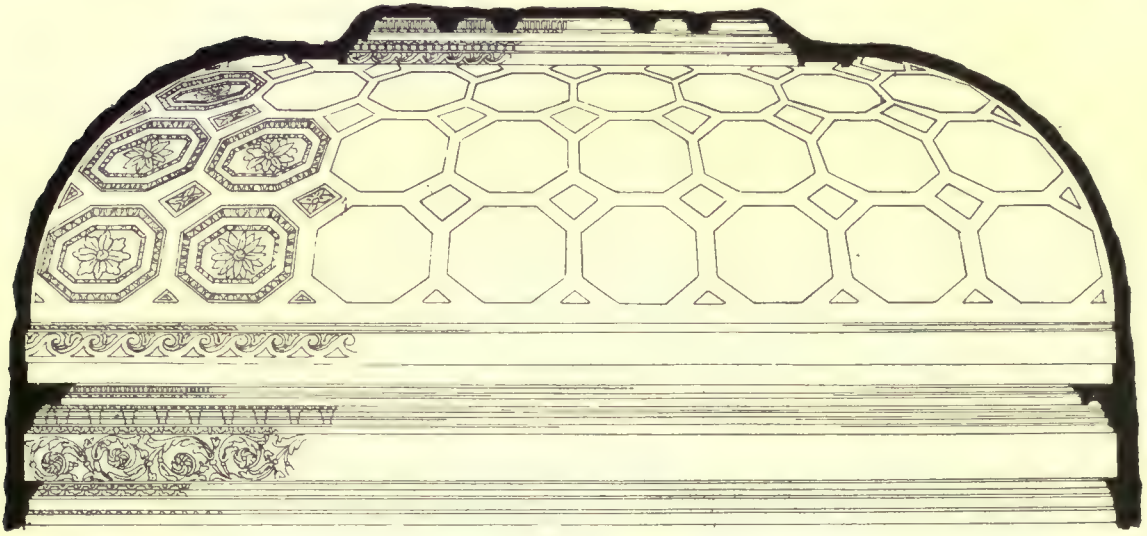
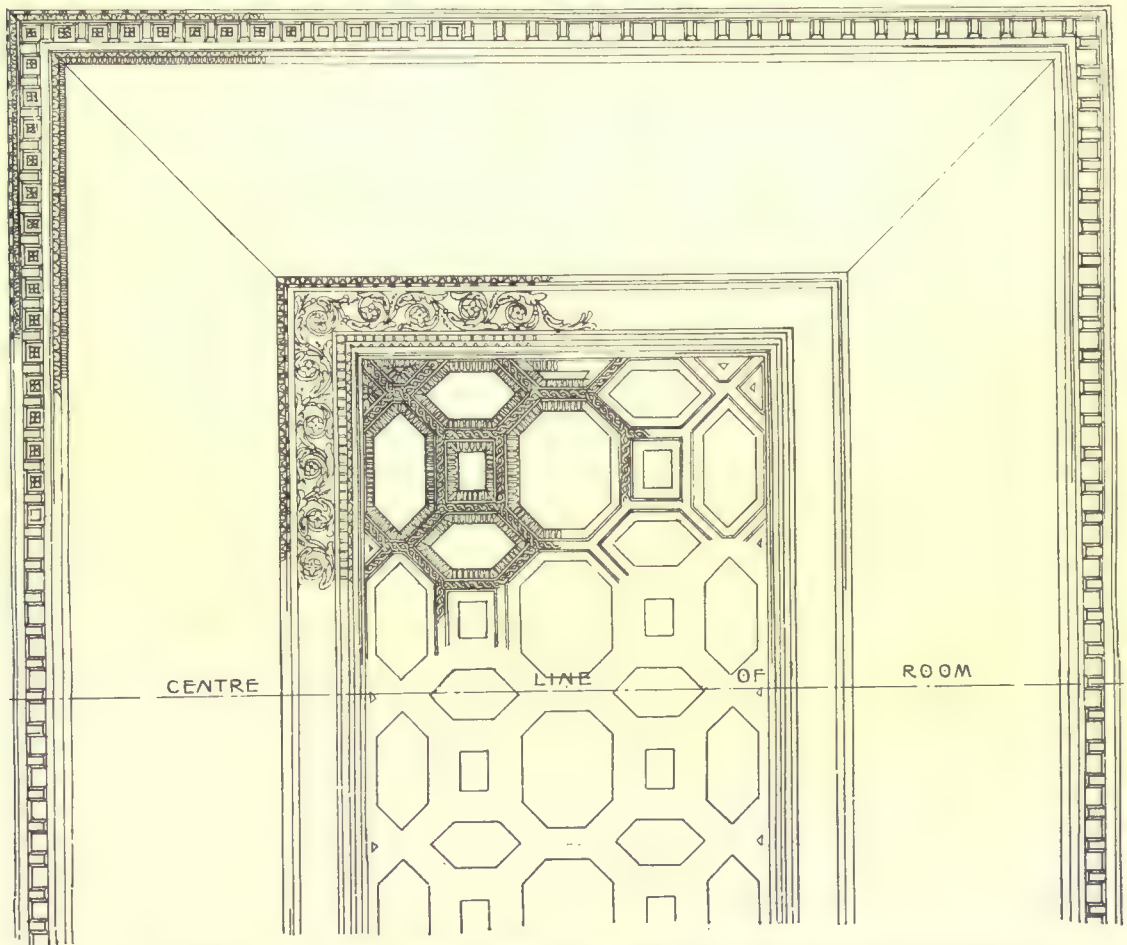


FIG. 412.—Ceiling of the Saloon, Holkham House.

a short rib of similar section at the angle, forming a long, narrow, rectangular panel between each. A half octagon terminates the flat portion at each end. A circular rosette is planted in the centre of each panel. Where the soffits (enriched with a vigorous guilloche detail) of the ribs intersect, there is a rose, the centre of which protrudes more than is usual. Where the ribs forming the octagonal panel join it, a similar moulded beam is continued down the cove on the opposite side of the rib at the top. Between these ribs on the cove there are irregularly shaped octagonal sunk panels enclosed by an egg-and-tongue moulding. The ceiling of the state banqueting room is coved from a similar entablature, whose frieze is enriched with a repetition of antique classical ornament. A moulded rib terminates



SECTION



SCALE 12 0 0 5 10 FEET

FIG. 413.—SALOON, HOLKHAM HOUSE.



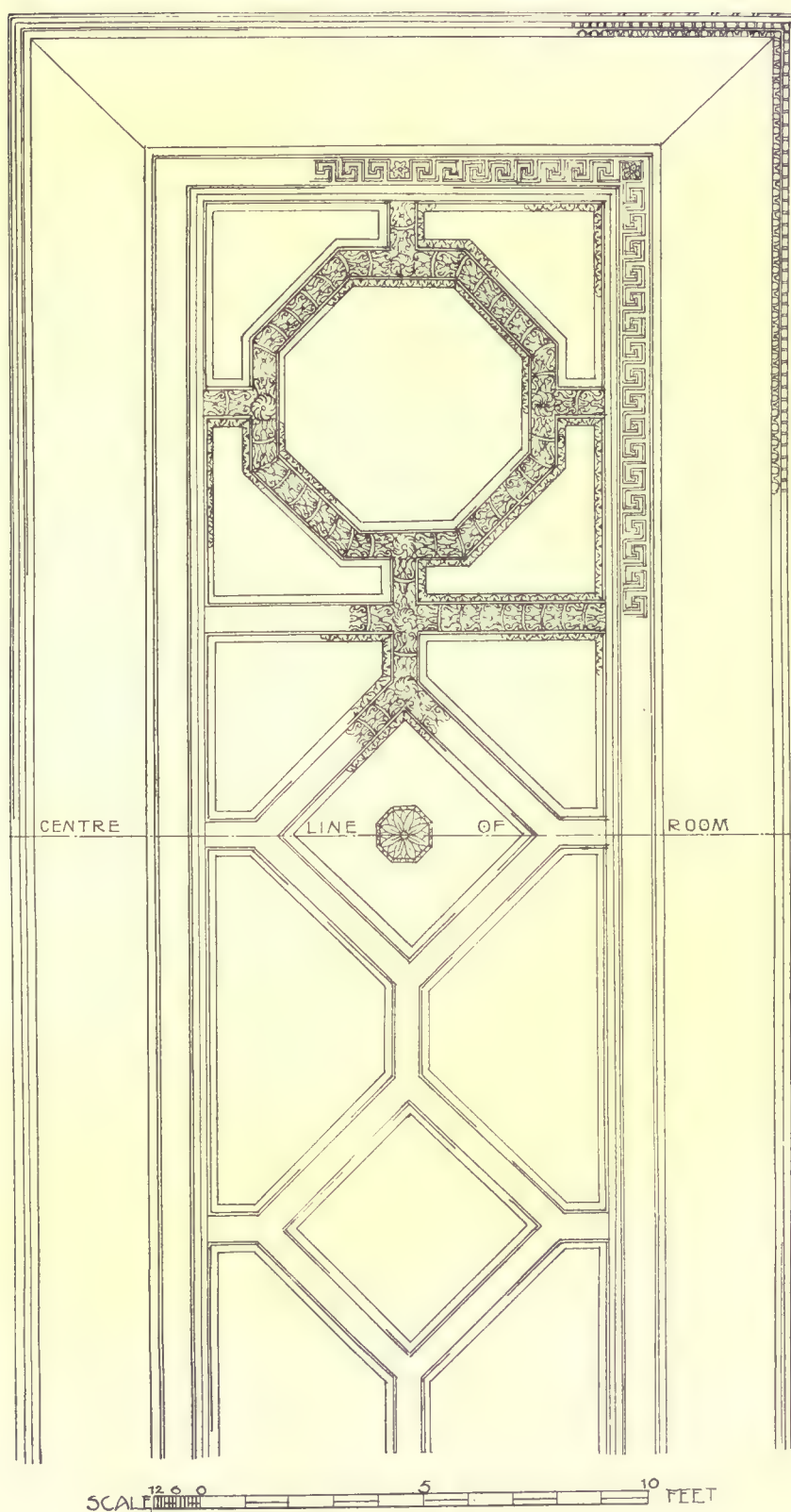


FIG. 414.—LIBRARY, HOLKHAM HOUSE.

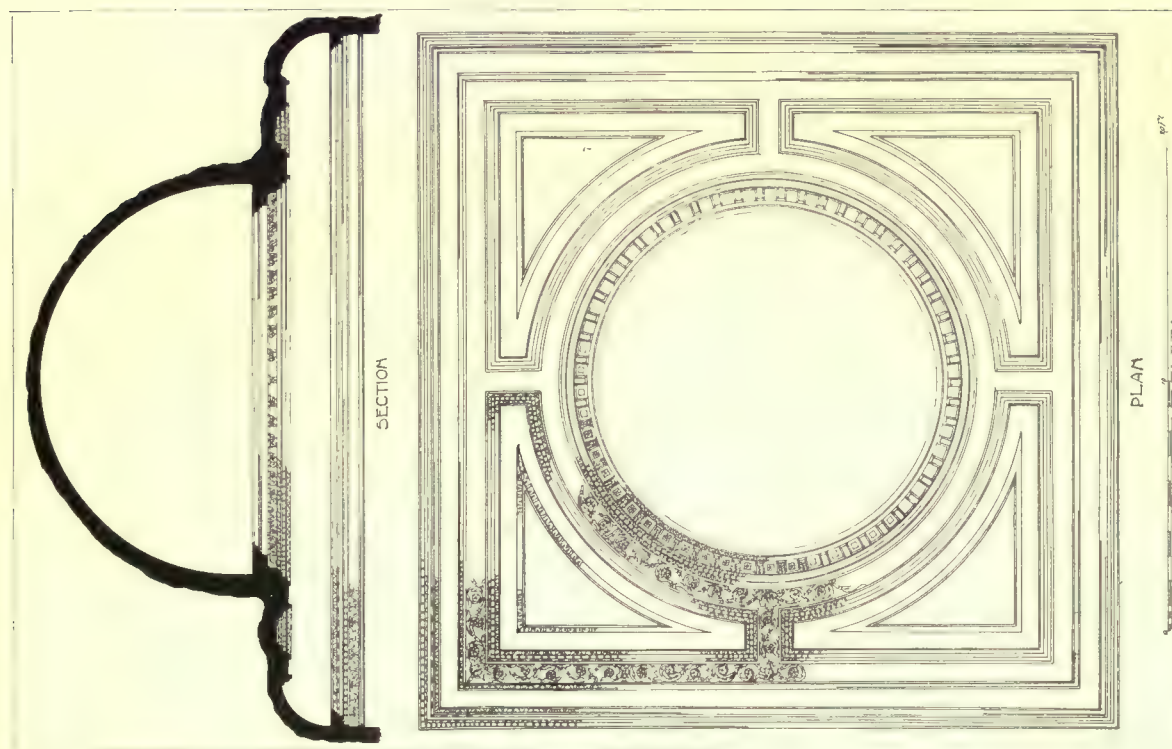


FIG. 416.—Great Dining-room.

CEILINGS AT HOLKHAM HOUSE.

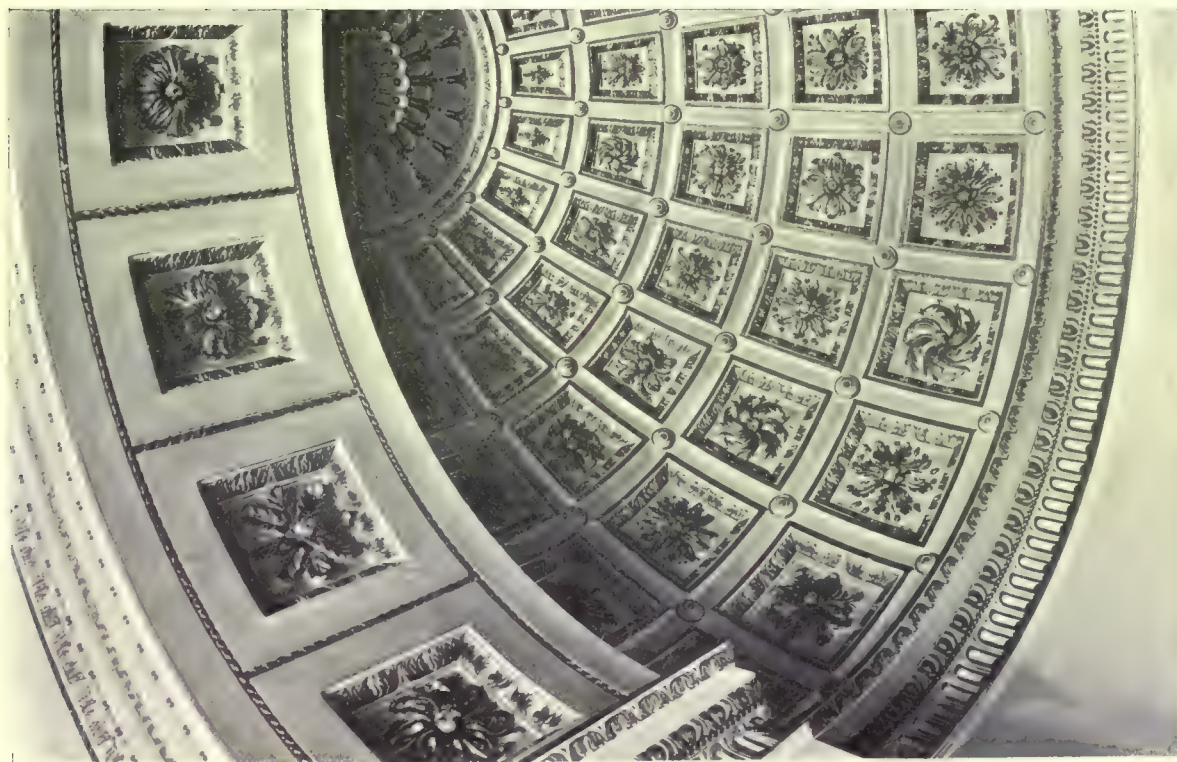


FIG. 415.—Dining-room.



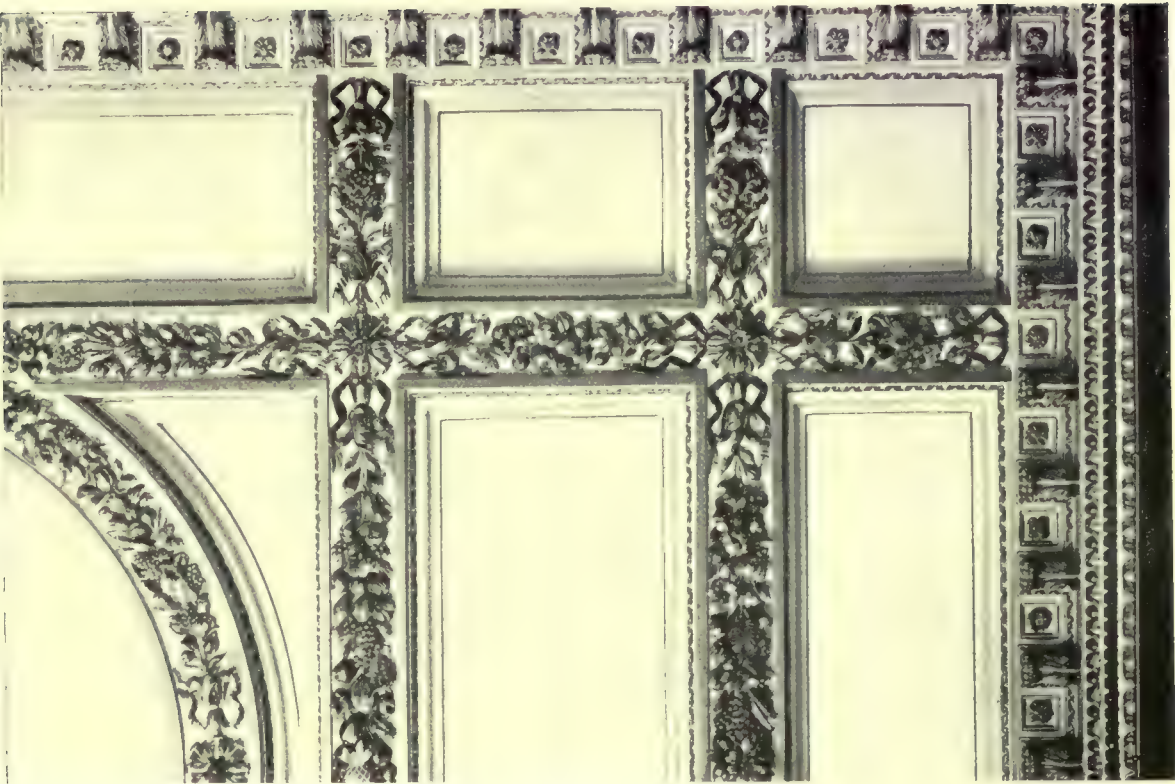


FIG. 418.—North Dressing-room.

CEILINGS AT HOLKHAM HOUSE.

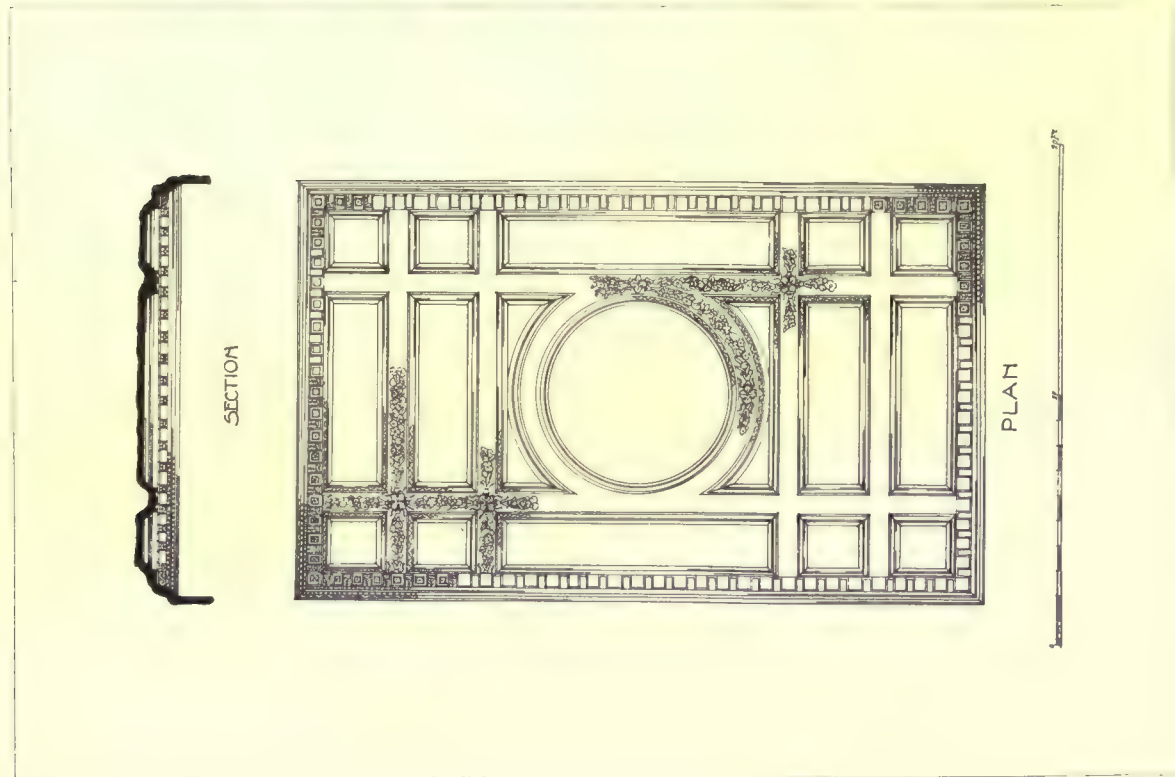


FIG. 417.—North Dressing-room.

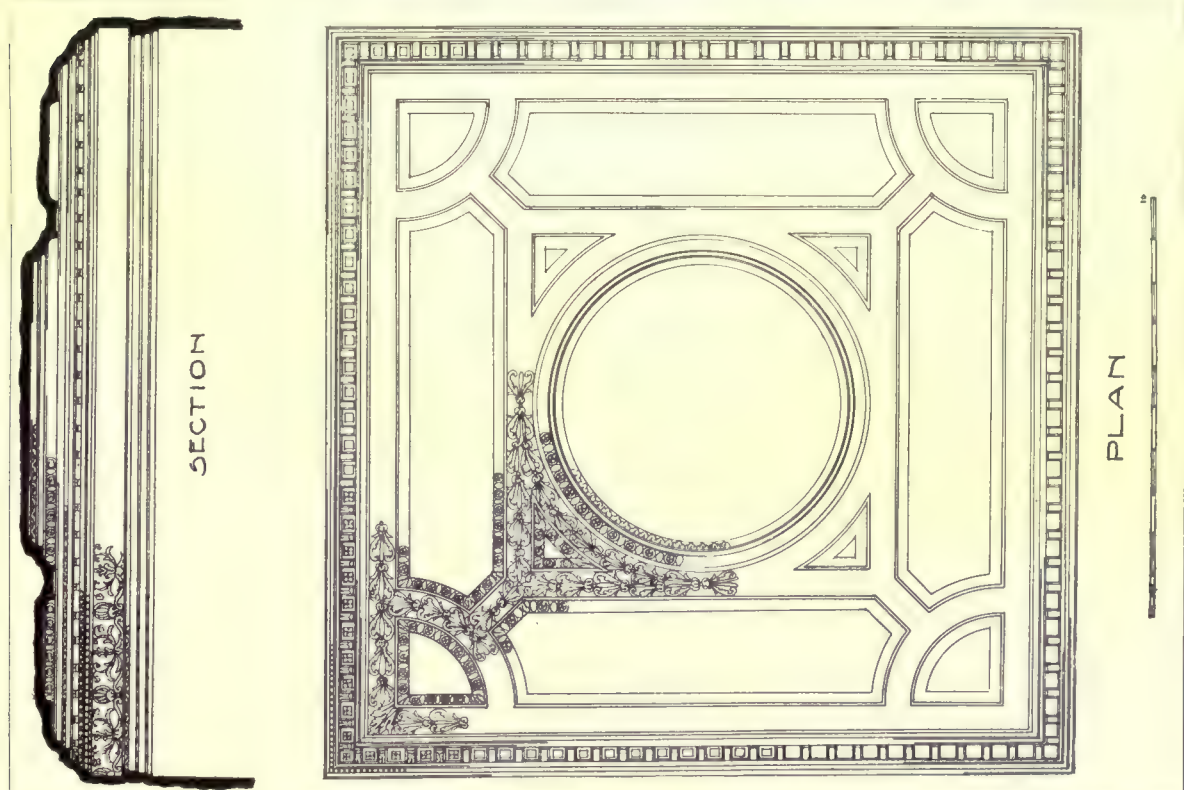


FIG. 419.—Green Dressing-room, New Wing.

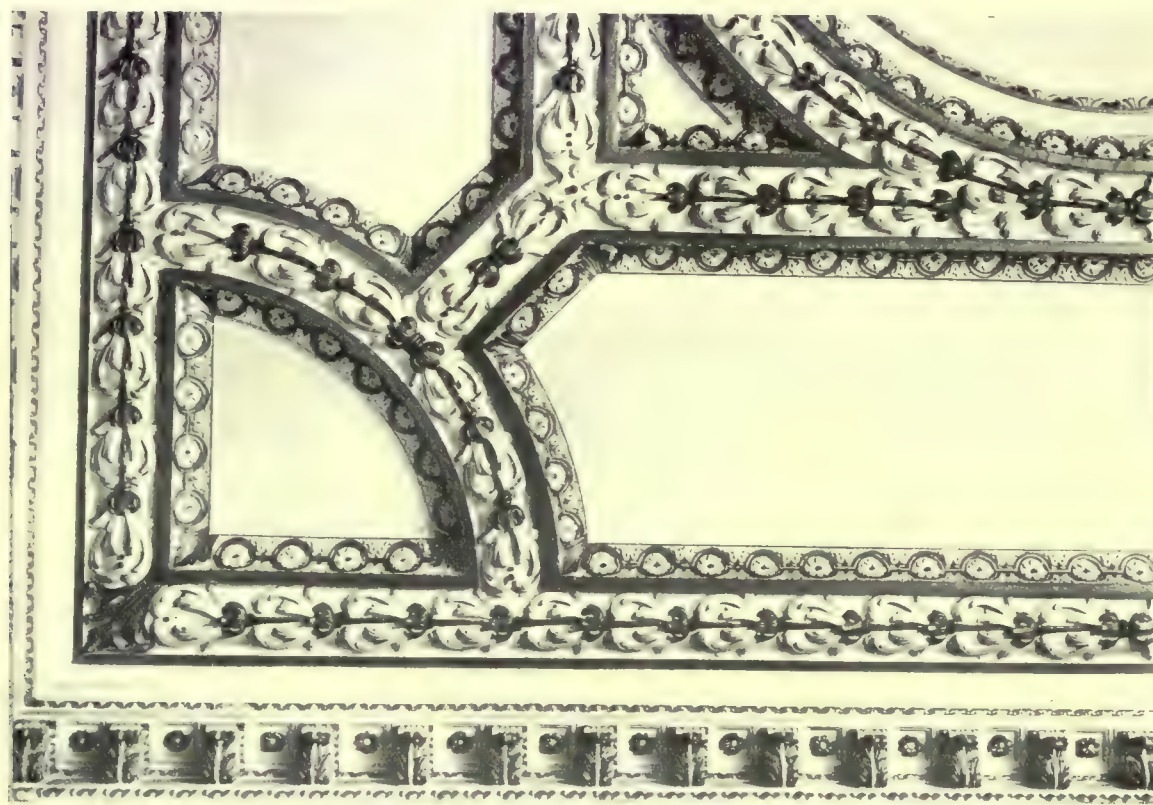


FIG. 420.—Green Dressing-room, New Wing.

CEILINGS AT HOLKHAM HOUSE.



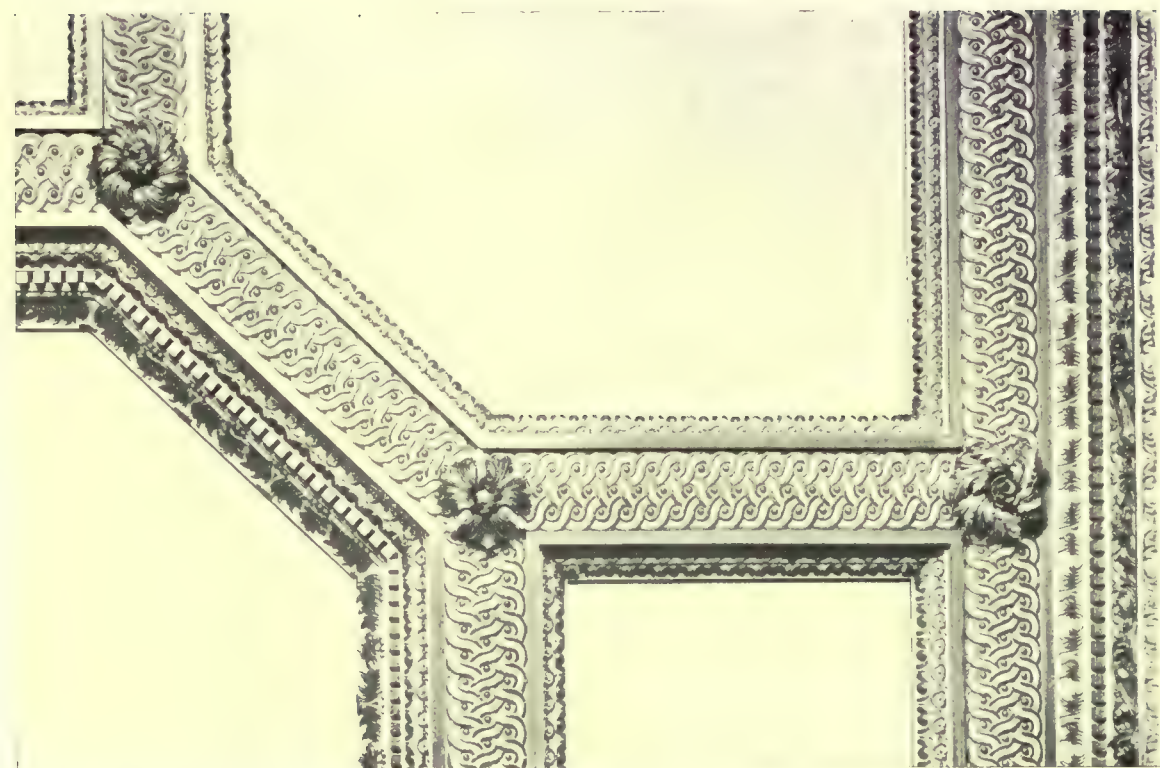


FIG. 422.—State Dressing Chamber,

CEILINGS AT HOLKHAM HOUSE.

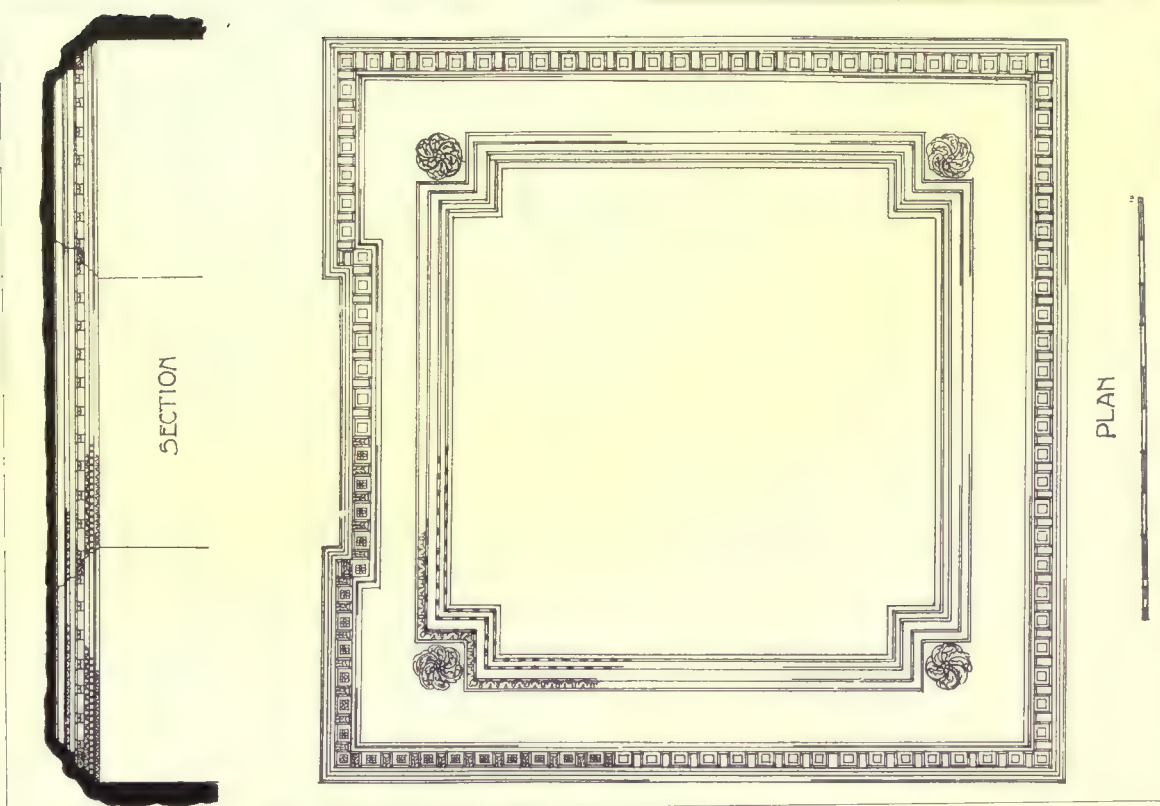


FIG. 421.—Ante-Chamber, Old Wing.

the cove at the top, richly moulded on the inner side, thereby recessing the flat portion of the ceiling, which consists of a painted panel. The soffit of this rib, which is enriched with a guilloche ornament of a flat type, is carried down the cove in the form of a console bracket, enriched with scrolled acanthus leafage springing on the front from a wide acanthus leaf. The cove's sunk panel has a small enriched moulding between these brackets. The enrichment in this room is thin, and intricate in detail, resembling the later work of the brothers Adam.

The salon has a similar ceiling to that of the state banqueting room, except that the cove is plain, and has since been painted with ornament of a



FIG. 423.—Ceiling at York.

questionable type. The wall panelling in this room is a typical specimen of the kind that became general about this time, and appeared in most of the architectural books of the day. It is adapted in a severe manner from the French pattern. An architrave moulding with its corners broken outward is formed at the top into an ogee pediment, and there is a scroll at the bottom of acanthus leafage and cornucopiæ in fairly full relief. These panels are frequently met with in the houses of the time, and sometimes contain oil paintings, or silk panels, or do duty as overmantels; but wall panels such as these are the least satisfactory features of the plasterwork of this period, often robbing the rooms in which they are found of the dignity which they should have. Although the French patterns



from which they were probably taken were more rococo in detail, they were more successfully managed.

Foots Cray House, and Mereworth Castle, both in Kent, are copied almost entirely from Palladio's villa, built for Monsignor Almerico at Vicenza, of which

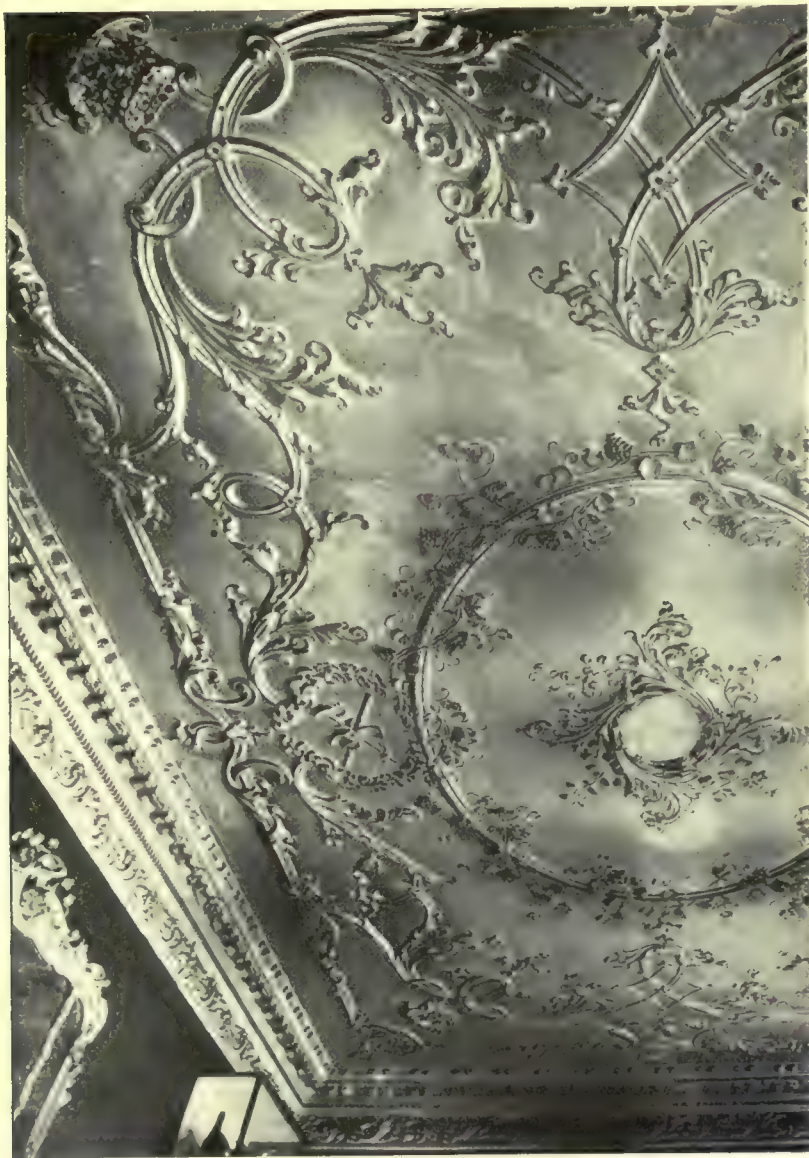


FIG. 424.—Ceiling at York.

the dome of the hall is the main interior feature. At Mereworth it is panelled with small nearly square radiating panels, each containing an acanthus rosette. Four circular windows cutting into the dome have recessed sunk panels beneath them ornamented with swags in bold relief. The other houses built by Campbell contain this severe plasterwork, designed in a number of cases by Kent. The only redeeming feature in Kent's plasterwork was the setting of most of his ceilings, for the tradition was lost, and ornament degenerating rapidly.

Lord Burlington, an amateur architect, the patron of William Kent, is said to have designed the Assembly Rooms at York, about 1730, and a villa at Chiswick, 1729, but Kent was probably

employed to design and detail the ornamental features, which at York are in the interior—very severe, correct in proportion, and the mouldings refined in detail. Figs. 423-425 are typical examples of most of the ceilings of this period in York, and in Hull (Fig. 426). The villa at Chiswick, which resembles Mereworth Castle, has a central hall for its main feature, but is octagonal instead of circular, and

covered with an octagonal dome enriched with radiating coffered moulded and sunk octagonal panels, with a small centre acanthus rosette planted in each. The plasterwork on the walls below is of the characteristic, and somewhat uninteresting, type, consisting chiefly of similar wall panels to those in the salon in Burlington House, lifeless in detail and over-elaborated.

More spirited work than the foregoing was being done at this period, under the direction of Giacomo Leoni, a Venetian architect introduced by Lord Burlington.

Lyme Hall, Cheshire, an Elizabethan mansion to which he made some additions, has an elaborate ceiling in its dining-room. (The oak carving by one of the Grinling Gibbons' school.) This ceiling was apparently the work of a French artist; it is coved all round with a smaller cove than was usual, springing from a wood cornice. Over each mitre in the cove is a mythological beast or bird, surrounded with scrolled acanthus leafage in vigorous full relief. At the top of the cove is an enriched cavetto moulding, and a band of guilloche enrichment, semicircular instead of flat in section, and rather narrow. A similar guilloche forms the large octagonal panel in the centre of the room, whose



FIG. 425.—Ceiling at York.

diameter is equal to the width of the flat sides of the ceiling, and its two opposite sides are formed by the guilloche at the top of the cove. By means of a modillioned cornice on the inner side of the octagonal panel, the centre panel is raised above the level of the ceiling. A large circular band of enrichment nearly touching its sides surrounds this octagonal panel, and this is composed of a flat band, about 15 inches wide, of vine leaves and fruit, springing from a centre band enclosed in small mouldings. The spaces at each end of the ceiling between the octagon and the cove are divided into three sunk panels, formed by ribs of a similar



guilloche ornament dentilled and moulded at sides with a similar moulding to that on the outside of the octagonal ribs which reach from the angles of the



FIG. 426.—Ceiling over the Staircase, Wilberforce House, Hull.

octagon to the rib at top of cove. A modelled acanthus leaf is planted over each mitre of the guilloche.

These three end panels are filled with vigorously modelled scrolled acanthus

leafage. The four corner panels have rosettes of similar leafage in the centre of the scroll-work from which candelabra depend. The modelling in this ceiling is vigorous and spirited. The acanthus leafage is of the French type, though modelled in fuller relief than was usual in France. The group of leafage in the corner of cove is also quite French in spirit. The general effect of this ceiling is rich, though the end panel seems crowded, and the work in its detail is far more spirited than the typical work of that time. John Wood, sen., commenced the rebuilding of Bath in 1727. In his earlier domestic work in this city there is some suitable and dignified plasterwork. Most of the houses were built speculatively. In the chief rooms of his larger houses the ceiling is usually coved, springing from an enriched cornice, refined in detail. The central flat portion of the ceiling was frequently enclosed by a moulded and enriched rib.

In these houses (unfortunately many of them are now let as cheap lodging-houses) there are charming instances of the successful adaptation of Palladian architecture to domestic work.

In a house Wood, sen., built for himself, No. 15 Queen Square, he used plasterwork of a more elaborate detail. Round the walls of the hall on the first floor, which contains a fine oak staircase, are panels modelled in low relief representing classical mythological subjects. But the perspective in them is carried too far to be successful. The panels are surrounded with an architrave moulding, pediment, and swags, similar to those used by Kent. The staircase hall was originally domed, but now has a plain flat ceiling.

At Bath the chief plasterwork is in the Assembly Rooms, designed by John Wood, jun., in 1769. This is of the usual dignified type, though rather over-enriched, but is suitable to rooms designed as they were for amusement. (The effect of this work has been spoiled by the modern "decorator," who, at some architect's bidding, has painted, gilded, and stencilled every square inch of visible plaster surface in the usual barbaric manner.)

The detail of the plasterwork in most of the later houses in Bath is in the "Adams" style, which had become the most popular.

Immediately after Kent's time, the country was flooded with plasterwork based upon the letter rather than the spirit of the Louis XIV. period, and seldom indeed did it show the delicacy of handling, and the refinement in modelling of the French work, and was usually straggling and purposeless. Isaac Ware, who in his earlier years had condemned it, resorted to the same style in many of his domestic houses. His most successful work was Chesterfield House, Mayfair, 1749, which contains some over-elaborate plasterwork in the form of swags and scrolled acanthus leafage, too many by far, and less spirited than the earlier work of his hand. The ceiling in the library is interesting for its architectural setting, which consists of a large octagonal central panel, formed by a moulded rib, with a flat guilloche ornament on its soffit. The ribs of the four sides of the octagon that are parallel to the sides of the room are continued to an enriched modillioned cornice, whose upper members are similar to, and mitre with, the moulded sides of the rib. The spaces left at each end of the octagon are nearly square, and contain a circular moulded rib of a similar section, enclosing a circular panel connected at the four cardinal points by a short





FIG. 426A.—SOMERSET HOUSE, HALIFAX.

length of rib to the cornice and rib to the octagon. On each side of the ceiling are three long, narrow, rectangular panels. All the panels are filled with scrolls and leafage, forming a deeply modelled groundwork.

Stucco-work had now fallen to its lowest ebb, and practically came to an end, giving way to the rising school of the brothers Adam, who were employed, or their style copied, by such men as James Paine, Morris, Taylor, Carr of York, Dance, &c. William Chambers, however, was the exception, and, faithful to classic tradition, was most exact in all his detail. In pursuit of his calling he very frequently had casts from the antique made for use in his office or studio, and his plasterwork, therefore, was of the severest type. (Somerset House, 1776-86, in which the various Government Departments are housed, contains plasterwork executed by Joseph Wilton, Celrici, and Thomas and Charles Clarke, in the style on which he insisted.)

The final decline and extinction of the plasterer's art was brought about by several causes. The first half of the nineteenth century was responsible for the production of a cheap so-called "Classical" style of building, in which it was the fashion to face buildings with a debased form of Roman architecture in plaster or "stucco," as the material was then and is still misnamed. Let it be observed that it was *not* the "stucco-duro" referred to in these chapters as used by the ancients.

Façades of mansions, houses, and public buildings, with their pseudo-Classic columns, capitals, porches, pediments, cornices, &c., flank the London streets and squares with soot-absorbed, wet-soaked, and painted Classic abortions, whilst the suburban and provincial towns fared no better with villas and bare walls of the same dull, stupid, and fraudulent style of building, such as was never before tolerated. This cheap and miserable imposture had its "run," and in the course of time the inevitable stagnation and reaction was brought about.

Plaster and "stucco," as it was called, had been degraded to its lowest degree, and the words "stucco" and "plaster," charged as they were with the abuse they had been subjected to, became words of horror and reproach, conveying as they did and still do to many nothing but a shuddering sense of commonplace vulgarity of building and a loathsome form of ornamentation whenever the words were mentioned.

To many persons still the very sound of "plasterwork" or plaster decoration immediately presents to them recollections of perforated ceiling centre-flowers, pendants, cornices, and other horrors of Belgravia and Mayfair. This was one of the last ghastly forms of contagious decline in which the plasterer's art expired—and its influence is still the chief obstacle to a general and healthy revival and practice of a genuine traditional art of the plasterer.

The unconscious desire for decoration is still rife, and is largely manifest everywhere by the sticking of patterned papers, stamped paper pulp, and other insanitary makeshifts on the ceilings and walls of our homes. This desire is inherent in remote country cottage and town house alike, but the plasterers are slow to rise to the increasing demand for plaster decoration possessing genuine artistic merit. The craft has slid into a purely mechanical trade. Its trade union has done much to uphold and educate, but it could do much more to purge its ancient sins and intermarry it again with art. The art needs help, and it is the object of this volume to offer some little assistance and advice to those who desire it.



## CHAPTER XII.

## THE ADAM BROTHERS AND THEIR WORK.

THE brothers Robert and James Adam, architects, lived and worked in the eighteenth century, between the years 1728 and 1794. The history of their work



FIG. 427.—Design for a Ceiling, by Robert Adam.

is as interesting as it is quaint. They were descendants of a family of architects. Their father, William Adam, of Maryburgh, near Kinross and Kirkcaldy, was responsible for the design, restoration, or alteration of a large number of Scottish mansions and houses. Of his four sons, John, Robert, James, and William, the eldest

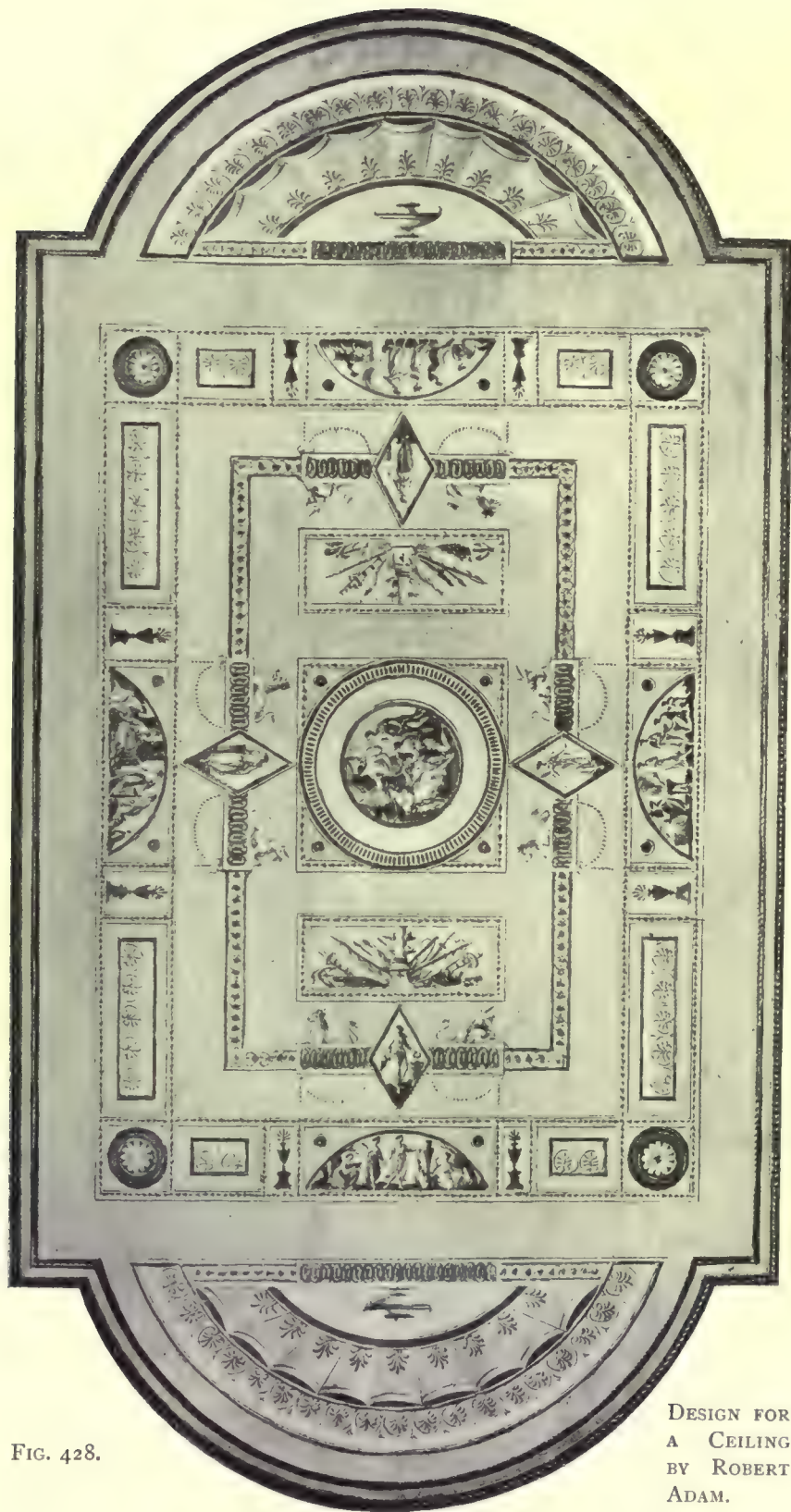


FIG. 428.

DESIGN FOR  
A CEILING  
BY ROBERT  
ADAM.



was the most closely associated with him in business. Robert Adam, the second son—F.S.A. and F.R.S., born in 1728, at Kirkcaldy, Fifeshire—was educated at Edinburgh University; entered into partnership with his brother James; died in 1792, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. In 1756 he went to Italy in order to study the antique buildings of Rome, from which he borrowed his inspirations. His brother and partner, James Adam, died in 1794. They designed and executed between them an immense amount of this plasterwork.

No one can deny that their ceiling decoration was most graceful and refined in design, delicate and subtle in modelling, though somewhat feeble in its relief; but their ideas were emulative (and poor at that) of a once living (Pompeian) and imitative period of design and quality of modelling. Whether taken from Rome, or some masterpiece of the Renaissance, this imitation was but a *poor* substitute for the original work which inspired them, and apart from its lack of *marked personality*, it is, to say the least of it, doubtful whether the use which they made of a composition which is *not a plaster* does not put them out of court, so far as plasterwork is concerned.

The brothers were not the most modest of men, for we find one of them saying, "We have introduced a great diversity of ceilings, friezes, and decorated pilasters, and have added grace and beauty to the whole, by a mixture of grotesque stucco and painted ornaments, together with the following *rainceau*, with its fanciful figures and winding foliage. If we have any claim to approbation, we found it on this alone:—that we flatter ourselves we have been able to seize with some degree of success the beautiful spirit(?) of antiquity, and to inform it with novelty, and variety, through all our numerous works."

The material used by the brothers was a mixture of dead plaster or gypsum or fibre with a glutinous compound, modelled in lowest relief, and produced while being pressed hot into metal moulds. The exact nature of this composition has never as yet been discovered, but it is known as Liardet's preparation, in which the Adams were interested financially. The same material applied externally suffered greatly from exposure, and was utterly worthless, as may be seen from the remnants of work on the east side of Fitzroy Square, London. The first to use it in England was John Jackson—founder of the present firm of Messrs Jackson & Sons, of London.

The painting of the ceilings was done chiefly by Antonio Zucchi (a Venetian), Angelica Kaufman, and Pergolesi. Referring to the work at Kenwood, Lord Mansfield's seat near Highgate, Robert Adam says: "The grounds of the panels and friezes are coloured with light tints of pink and green, so as to take off the glare of the white, so common in every ceiling till of late. This always appeared to me so cold and unfinished, that I ventured this variety of grounds to relieve the ornaments, to remove the crudeness of the white, and to create a harmony between the ceiling and the side walls with their hanging decorations."

The stucco of the Kenwood ceilings was the work of Joseph Rolfe.

The original drawings of many ceilings by Robert and James Adam are preserved in several volumes in Sir John Soane's Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London. Two of these are reproduced in Figs. 427 and 428, and a photograph of executed work is given in Fig. 429.

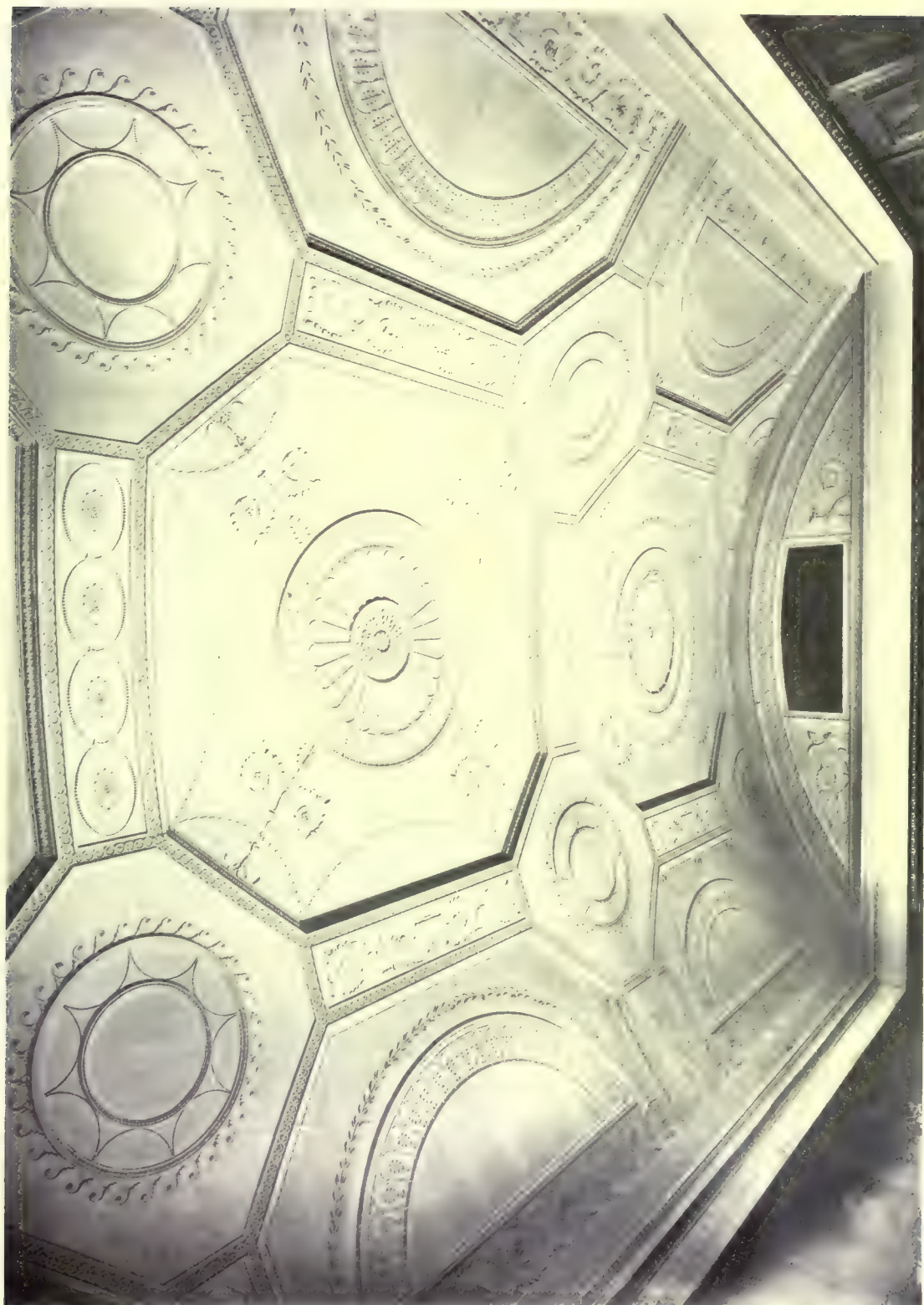


FIG. 429.—THE LIBRARY, BELTON HOUSE.



Their designs were distinguished by the arrangement of circles, ovals, octagons, hexagons, lozenge shapes, fan-like forms, vases, wreaths, sphinxes, medallions of various shapes containing figures and mythological subjects, festoons, drapery, cupids, caryatides, rams' heads, sea horses, winged animals, pateræ, honeysuckle, acanthus, and other foliage. They published illustrations of their executed works, both in *Architecture and Decoration*, in three large folio volumes, now extremely rare. A reproduction of the decorative part of this important work is contained in a volume issued by Mr B. T. Batsford in November 1880,



FIG. 430.—Central Portion of a Ceiling at Shavington, Cheshire.

and republished in December 1901. A reproduction of the complete three volumes has also been published.

Some of the principal work done by Robert and James Adam is at Sion House, Isleworth, the seat of the Duke of Northumberland; Sir Watkin Wynn's house in St James's Square, 1770; the Earl of Derby's house, Grosvenor Square; at Kenwood House, the residence of Lord Mansfield; at Shelburne House, Berkeley Square (now Lansdowne House); at Mansfield Place; Portland Place, 1770; Portland Place, 1778; Harewood House, Hanover Square, 1776 (lately demolished); White's Club, St James's Square, 1787; and at Gordon College, Aberdeen; besides a great deal of other work in London, and examples in the principal towns.

## GEORGE RICHARDSON (ABOUT 1776).

George Richardson, architect, who had worked with the brothers Adam, published in 1776 a "Book of Ceilings, composed in the Style of the Antique-Grotesque," and had, like many of his contemporaries, travelled in Italy, and studied the Roman antiquities. His work, like that of the brothers Robert and James

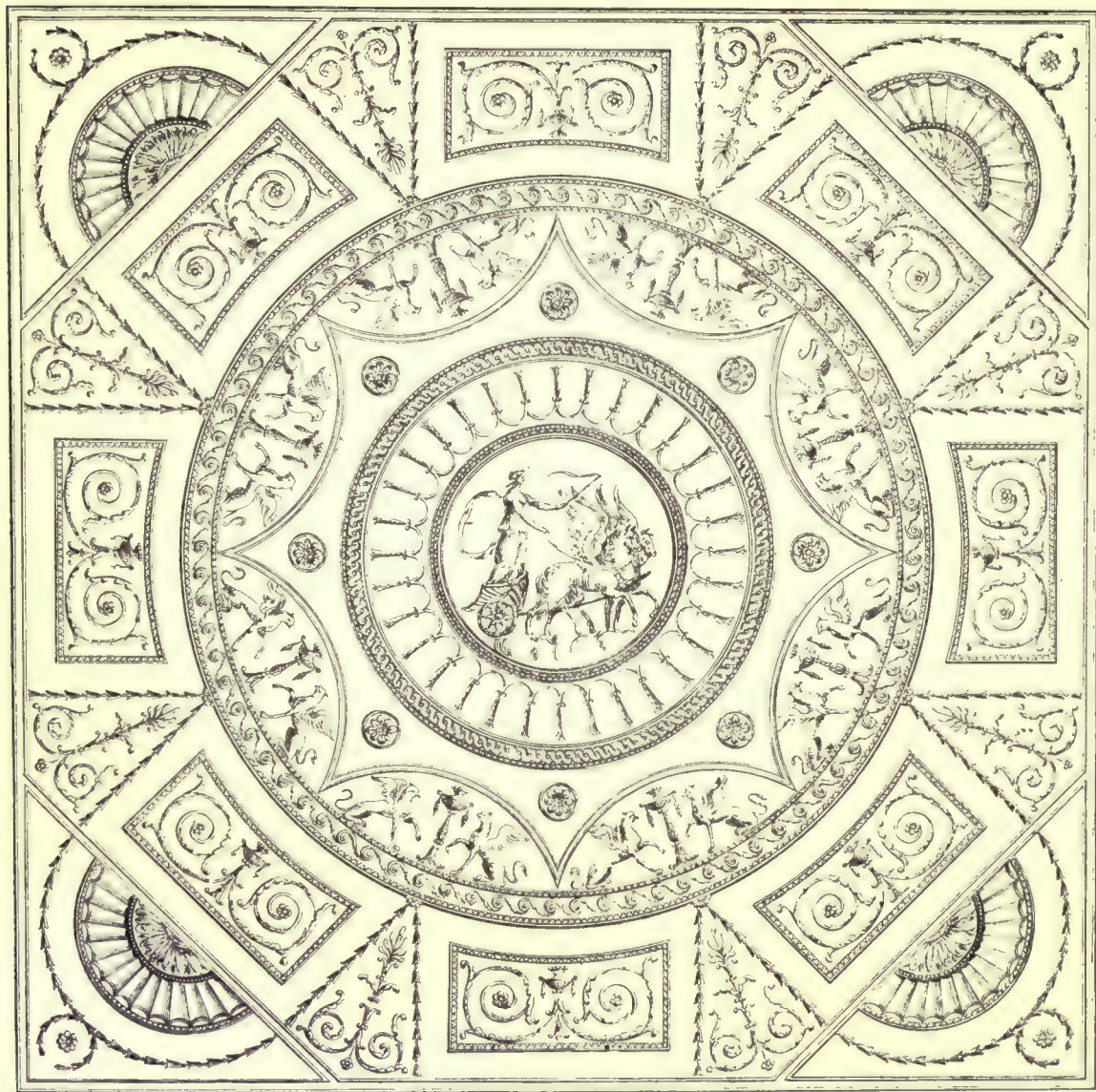


FIG. 431.—Design for a Ceiling by George Richardson.

Adam, was based on his foreign studies, and executed in the composition known as "scagliola." His circular panels contained representations of figure subjects, such as Hercules; Mars and Venus, attended by Cupid; Diana, bathing, attended by Nymphs; Neptune, and other similar stories, borrowed from Greek and Roman originals, or from the Italians who copied them (Fig. 431).



## CHAPTER XIII.

## MODERN PLASTERWORK.

## PART I.—PRESENT-DAY METHODS.

SOME matters were touched upon in the preceding chapters which should be taken to heart by designers and workers in plaster at the present day.

Why *is* the plasterwork of the nineteenth century so uninteresting, bad, and uncouth? Chiefly because the trade, or profession, or calling is divorced from pleasurable and legitimate production.

Besides which, in the completeness of this divorce of the art from the craft, the opportunity of self-expression is denied to the worker, whatever his talent is.

Being merely an instrument in the hands of a man who designs without that knowledge to be acquired only from some personal acquaintance with and handling of material, which is so helpful, necessary to and inseparable from good expression and design in any medium, the workman cannot be expected to take great pleasure in the

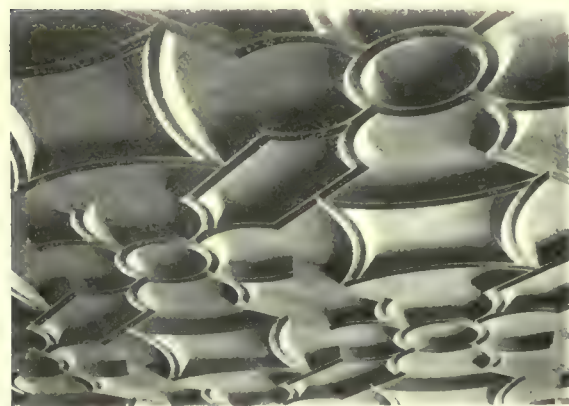


FIG. 432.—Modern Ceiling of Hall at Brickwall, Northiam, Sussex.

execution of his task. In saying this the author is fully alive to the fertility of the soil for the sowing of good seed, as also to the fact that the average architect denies much opportunity to many capable craftsmen by insisting on the copying of old styles instead of encouraging fresh thought and personality. The architect is naturally and nervously afraid (and perhaps wisely so in many instances) of the “new art” development, which is dying a natural death, excepting in the case of “trade firm” imitations.

Many opportunities occur, even in the laying of the plain surface of a wall, or of a ceiling, which the man in the office would grasp if he had the plaster instead of his paper before him, seeing in the play of its surface the development of pattern in which lies the soul of the art.

The fault of the modern plasterer is not in the man himself, but in the conditions subject to which he must do his day's work. In himself he is clever enough, but his teaching has mostly been misguided, and his art for the last two centuries dead.

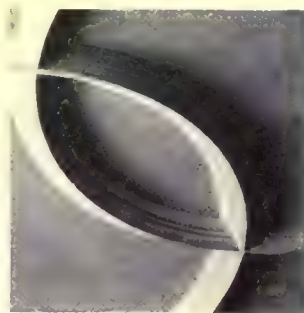
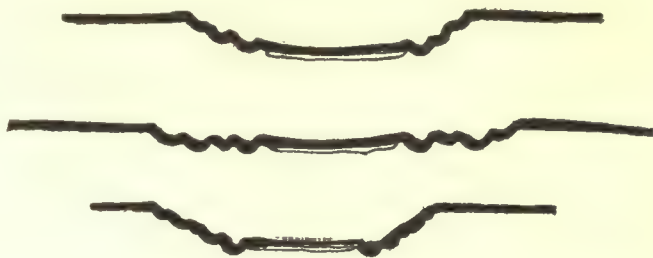


FIG. 433.—Section of Modern Ceiling Rib.

His fault—if so we must call it—is that his work is almost too good, for the plasterer's idea of his work, and an artist's idea of plasterer's work are two entirely different things. The one aims at perfection of surface in every direction, as if he had in his mind the slate bed of a billiard table. His material is vastly different from that which the earlier plasterers used. It is *not seasoned*—that is to say, the lime is not “slaked” or toughened, or chopped up nearly as much as the lime which was used when most old cottages and houses were decorated on the outside. His sand also is vastly different, being riddled, and sieved of all the irregular qualities of the old ceilings which we admire so much (see Fig. 130). He wishes his moulded work to be as true and as accurate as rails of the hardest steel. And the result when his ends are attained is that we feel it is all overdone. A comparison of Figs. 136 and 202 with Figs. 432 and 433 will not be out of place here.

Though during the last hundred years he has modelled to some extent, his work for the most part looks as if he had obtained his idea of finish from the joiner or the stone mason, though in truth it more nearly approaches the achievements of the ironfounder than either of the foregoing. (They at least have some freedom left whether their methods are right or wrong.) It can hardly be said too often that the above-described methods are wrong.

At the present day, when there is decorative work to be done, it is generally turned out in the office, away from the building itself, and based very probably on some pattern of plastering which was *designed for yet another material*. The cornice of plaster, for instance, with its mouldings, enrichment, modillions, dentils, or blocks, will in such cases be almost identical with those of



SECTIONS OF OLD WAVED AND BEADED MOULDINGS.

FIG. 434. Feathers Inn, Ludlow.

FIG. 435.—Upper Swell Manor, Stow-on-the-Wold.

FIG. 436.—Bideford, North Devon.



FIGS. 437, 438.—Section of Mouldings not of a Contour legitimate to Plaster.

the joiner of plaster mouldings suited to nothing but wood, and modillions, supposed to give support as a bracket, unsuitable also to plaster; these and other such things, pretending to be what they are not, have no proper place in building construction or decoration, and the short way of dealing with them is to condemn them as shams.

The cornice of the nineteenth century had usually an angle of 45 degrees from the wall to the ceiling. This has for so long been looked upon as a matter of course, that it would doubtless be difficult for the majority of designers or draughtsmen,



unacquainted with the exact nature of the material and its impressive nature, to think it could be altered at all. But the man who has any gift of design, with a knowledge of his material, will see many ways of introducing variety and new interest into the cornice.



FIGS. 439-442.—Illustrating the Profile of Moulded Work suitable to the Running or Dragging of a Soft Granular Plaster with a Reverse Template.

Plaster possesses a granular nature and surface, and yet it can be laid thinly, and if handled with due regard to its nature and texture, it should be productive of pleasure to the eye.

The old plaster, as we have said, had this distinctly

*granular* surface, and taking its nature for granted, one has to think how, and in what forms, it can best, and most easily be *dragged* from length to length without the loss of its essential qualities, or failing to enhance by the handling the softness which is in the substance itself. It is fatal to treat the moulding of plaster, timber, or stone in the same manner. Taking the thinness of the former as a basis from which to start, it most naturally resolves itself into groupings of flat waves, rolls, and beadings, with perhaps flat, well-bevelled V-shaped members intervening, and without sharp arrises so liable to damage even in a harder material than plaster.

These forms are often suggested unintentionally in an interesting manner in some of the old work by the filling in and rounding off of many coatings of whitewash over the mouldings in such manner as should be taken to heart—Figs. 434-436, for instance, whilst Figs. 437 and 438 are foreign, and introduced only to show what, in our opinion, should be avoided.

Is it necessary for the cornice to occupy on any occasion an angle of 45 degrees, while the fact is that these groupings of wavy, rolled beadings and V-shaped mouldings can be made to lie very happily on the flat surface of a wall, or of a ceiling, in endless variety of pleasing forms?



FIGS. 443, 444.—Sections of Bad Modern Mouldings.

Flat spaces of varying width may be left between the groupings into which softly modelled enrichments can be inserted, and this, perhaps, is a not unpleasing method of treating a cornice for the ordinary room. Since circumstances vary so much, there is no rule that will meet every case, and herein lies the advantage of being conversant as a designer with the nature of the material. In my experience of dealing with these matters, every room presents its own interesting problem, wherein necessity is the mother of invention, and the designer has his opportunity. It is in the childish simplicity, and easy arrangement of ever-varying detail that pleasure and hope can be shown. The expression simplicity is used to imply a wise reticence, or restraint, a sufficiency, refined if dignified. This simplicity and reserve, as in the work of the plasterers of old, does not imply crudity of expression due to lack of scholarship, nor limitation of knowledge, technical or otherwise. Simple instances are given in Figs. 439-442. Figs. 443 and 444 show examples commonly in use, and unhappy in form. Economy at the present day is a matter not only of great importance, but of wise and binding usefulness. Though means may be limited, much can be done by the happy arrangement of flat bands, not necessarily modelled, and varying play in the levels of ceiling surfaces; by the working of nicely grouped arrangements of wavy mouldings, either straight or wriggled, and in more other ways than can be enumerated. Interlacing and intersecting arrangements of members, some pinched out of the

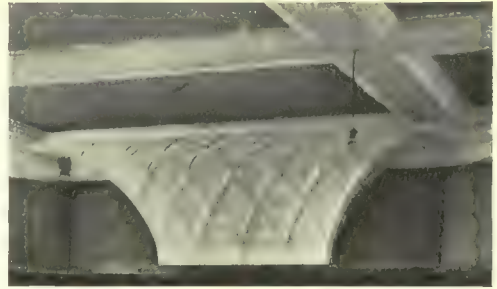


FIG. 445. Chimney Cove, "Hilders," Haslemere.

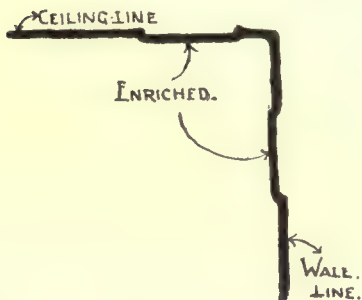


FIG. 446.



FIG. 447.

ceiling area as the instinct directs, and in no way resembling mouldings, but more like softened projections, and partaking of the nature of a soft line but merely possessing light and shadow. A variety of slightly hollowed, intersecting planes of geometrical form can be obtained by the ordinary plasterer by means of drawing out his pattern, and relieving these planes by the addition of a little plaster with trowel, as one sometimes sees in the work of Dutch plasterers (Fig. 445). Examples of this kind of work are to be found in some of the old buildings, and even in the Museums at Antwerp and other little Dutch towns at the present day.

A room may be rectangular or square, or of irregular shape, helping the designer to his ideas. A simple band of enrichment of ceiling or wall, varying in width or depth according to circumstances, suggested perhaps by the position of the heads of





FIG. 448.—Part of Beam Casing and Ceiling of a Dining-room.

window openings or doorways; another space between them and the ceiling may form the basis of a simple scheme of wall decoration (Figs. 446, 447). A beam or two may happen to break across the surface of the ceiling, round which this band, or part of it, may be taken. The enrichment, to be most naturally rendered in plaster, should not be *undercut*, but bevelled, with a degree of softness on its edges, in

order that it may shake out quite freely from the mould of plaster. Examples by the author are given in Figs. 448-451 of three beams across ordinary rooms, simple and quiet in treatment, which to some extent advocate this suggestion.



FIG. 449.—Detail of Beam and Frieze in a Dining-room.

Fig. 452 illustrates an attempt to cover the whole surface of a ceiling with irregular octagons in bands of modelled ornament with panelling of flat sinkings inside the octagon terminating centrally with flat pyramids. Large beams carrying walls above, and eased with straps of the same modelling, intersect the octagons of the ceiling; and the beam soffits are panelled to range with the main lines of the octagons, with beadings and rounded members suitable to drawing from moulds of plaster.



FIG. 450.—Detail of Part of a Beam Casing and Ceiling to Library of a Private House.

The room being a library, the pansy is made use of as a motif from the language of flowers, as symbolical of thought and reflection.

Fig. 453 shows part of an interesting ceiling of interlacing ribs of beadings terminated by modelled sprays of roses and lilies, with circular panels of fruit and leafage in the centre of the larger hollow-sided octagonal panels. The ribs spring out of beadings of similar scale on the edge of a modelled band round the walls, and alongside the casing of a beam of modelled plaster, similar in design and handling to the panels and terminals of the ceiling.





FIG. 451.—Detail of Beam Casing and Cornice in a Drawing-room.



FIG. 452.—Ceiling of Library, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



FIG. 453.—Portion of a Ceiling of Interlaced Beaded Ribs, Sprays, and Panels.



FIG. 454.—Detail of Frieze and Ceiling Decoration.



Fig. 454 shows one end of the ceiling of a large room on which a broad flat band of modelled rose enrichment in flat relief, projecting slightly from the ceiling, is disposed in large panels over the ceiling area. A softly moulded cornice crowns a frieze of softly modelled vine of free and easy design. The happy simplicity, breadth, and softness of line and modelling is apparent at a glance, and acceptable and pleasing in every way, whilst the detail is simple and conventional at the same time.

No law ever made has determined the limits of the rhythm of a design. In the case of the ceiling it has been left to the individual. On just such a surface as that



FIG. 455.—Detail of Ceiling Enrichment and surrounding Plaster Surface in the Dining-room of a Private House.

the designer has a playground after his heart, and one of the objects of writing this book is to show that art need never be lacking there.

The height of a ceiling to some extent determines the scale of the pattern, and the degree of relief in the modelling of its enrichments. In a well-lighted room, particularly if it is low, the modelling can be much lower in relief, and much more delicate in its detail, than in that of a higher one. If it should so happen that the room is not so well lighted, then greater relief and greater softness, with stronger detail on its surface, is a gain; not to mention the quality of roughness, or smoothness of surface, which one may be tempted to leave on the surface of the clay as

the work proceeds. This roughness of surface, in the case of a higher room, suggests a similar roughness of treatment, or, as we should call it, breadth, and a much desired effect may be gained by taking it into account.

Doubtless this was the way in which many of the simplest designs were evolved, and much may be done when other work is being executed in the utilisation of pieces left over, which would otherwise be thrown on the waste heap.

#### PICTORIAL SUBJECT PANELS.

Delightful examples of the decorative element in the setting and modelling of subject panels are illustrated in Figs. 456-459.

Although in two instances there is to some slight extent a pictorial tendency, the

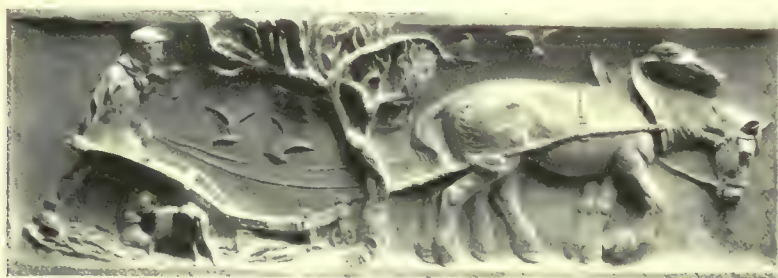


FIG. 456.—Modelled Plaster Panel.



FIG. 457.—Modelled Plaster Panel.

decorative setting of the figures, the massing of foliage, the lines of the tree branches, the general balance of form throughout, and the absence of perspective, entirely overrides the pictorial element without destroying it. The tufting of the grass and of the trees and the lining of the hair in Fig. 457, is admirable in its decorative handling.

The subjects speak for themselves without need of explanation. Such work as this may well be taken to heart by those who find pleasure in the modelling of plaster or of clay. The evident delight of the modeller in all that he sees in a country walk is manifest in part of these panels, and the simple placing of the essential forms in the spaces they are required to fill on the background, leave nothing to be desired.



The modeller has to be constantly thinking, of course, of the limitations imposed by the material on his work as a lover of Nature. He receives a certain impression suitable to the work he has in his mind, and the record of that impression in terms of art is what we shall find in his work. The detail in the modelling of a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, a rose, a bunch of grapes, a festoon, or a garland, can be varied according to mood or cast of mind, and their forms will reflect that mood.

The setting of the figure in decoration, of course, comes under the same ever-varying degrees of impressionism, excepting, perhaps, that no sensible person would claim as the zenith of the plasterer's art comparison with the more perfect art



FIG. 458.—Modelled Plaster Panel.



FIG. 459.—Modelled Plaster Panel.

of the sculptor, either in the decorative setting of the figure, the fruits of the earth, or of the flowers of the field.

In the past the rooms were often more spacious and more lofty than at the present day, and the relief was generally bold in such cases. This was undoubtedly in great part due to the simplicity and breadth of the life of the period, when accuracy in detail was not deemed so essential as it is at the present day.

The modeller of those days generally did his work in the building, and could take stock of the situation much better there than elsewhere. The scale of the ornament was thus more easily settled, and he was better able to make those allowances for deterioration and filling-up which must enter into his calculations.

#### IN SITU WORK.

Fig. 461 illustrates an example of working *in situ*, a process full of interest and delight, in addition to being a fairly rapid means of execution, and of quite reasonable cost.

It can with advantage be practised by any plasterer or modeller possessed of average intelligence, good taste, and discretion in the matter of elementary design, and feeling for niceness of surface.

The form and the main architectural lines were generally settled in the first instance without reference to the decoration. In this particular instance the room, a rectangular one hipped at both ends, was ceiled part of the way up the slope of the rafters, the walls being panelled in oak up to the level of the raking line. A coved channel is formed up each angle and round the ceiling line by the "running" of suitable soft mouldings, which soften the effect of lines which otherwise would be



FIG. 461.—Detail of United Angle of a Frieze and Ceiling in a Dining-room in a "Mansard Roof."

unpleasant. This coved angle is filled in with a husk ornament, built up leaf by leaf *in situ*. Within this the ceiling proper is counterceiled by a wide margin holding a shallow cove at its edge, across which leaves, grapes, spirals, and birds are stuck. These are all modelled in three or four convenient sizes, and cast in quantities and sent to the building. In order that the scale of the design may be well understood, the pattern is roughly drawn out on the surface of ceiling with a piece of chalk or charcoal tied on to the end of a long stick, and the details afterwards pulled together and revised at closer quarters. The grapes, leafage, spirals, and birds are then stuck up in position with plaster of Paris and lime putty, the outline being "stopped in" at the same time, and the stem work afterwards modelled



in between and connecting the detail in the same material, with small metal tools. Where the stem work has any strength of relief, it is well to rough in the main bulk of it with ordinary plaster, finishing off the modelling in the finer white plaster and putty.



FIG. 461A.—A Modern Ceiling.

It will be at once obvious what opportunities lie in so simple and easy a method as this, granted some little experience and aptitude for harmonious arrangement of form. Fig. 461A shows another example of the same process and method of working.

Another and nicer way of working *in situ* is drawing the design on the ceiling, as previously mentioned, and modelling the whole of it *in situ* in plaster of Paris and lime putty, or Keen's cement, which would be better. Fig. 462 shows small portions. This method is not necessarily too laborious, and if well considered from a proper decorative standpoint, may be developed with ease, speed, and fascination. A little mechanical assistance is quite allowable here, and time will be gained by using a few plaster dies of different sizes and variety for stamping the surface of the bevelled pats of cement representing leaves, berries, &c., with veining and other detail.

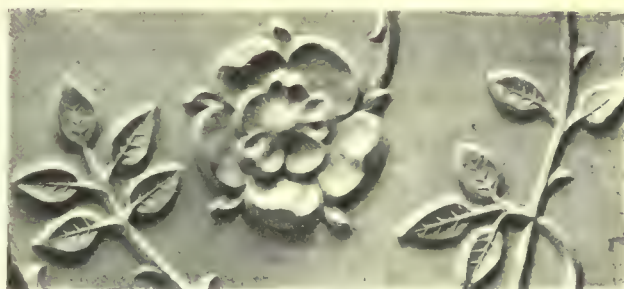


FIG. 462.—Detail of Modelling from a Ceiling.

Care should, of course, be taken in all cases of *in situ* modelling to properly wet the surface to be worked upon, and also to thoroughly well score and rough up the surface where the plaster or cement is to be applied, otherwise a bunch of grapes might drop off at some inconvenient moment and the plasterer's reputation would suffer.



FIG. 463.—The Annunciation.

It is hardly necessary to say that *the* great point to bear in mind in doing work of this nature is to keep the detail as simple in shape, and as broad in treatment and open in arrangement as the size and scale of the work will properly permit, and to avoid by all means the too common fault of overcrowding the detail.

In Fig. 463 we have work possessing the binding and controlling instinct of the architect combined with great power of design and execution. As an example of modern workmanship in plaster it would be difficult to surpass in its perfect decorative setting and beauty of detail in line and form.



## COLOUR APPLICATION.

The application of colour to modelled plaster has been productive of much serious consideration and discussion, and must only be briefly referred to in this book. Plaster of Paris is a dull material, requiring a dull and unreflective colour treatment, and the moment colour is added to relief complications ensue, affecting the definition and character of the relief, the grouping and disposition of detail into masses, and the amount of surface of detail employed. The colouring of modelled surfaces of stucco-duro in the past reveals, as previously mentioned, the employment of "tempera" as the most successful and permanent medium known so far.

To those students unacquainted with the nature of "tempera," it should be explained that it was obtained by mixing dry powdered colour with the yolk of egg.

A small portion of a modelled frieze coloured in this medium, from the gallery of a modern Gloucestershire house, is illustrated in Fig. 464. The colour process, however, gives but a feeble rendering of the original colouring. It was found necessary to keep the modelling flat and clearly defined in order to limit the colouring, and a fair amount of surface detail in the modelling was essential to give life to the massing of the colour which would have resulted otherwise in the loss of a certain amount of detail. Whilst in a moist condition it was found advantageous to wipe the colour off some of the surface veining of the leafage showing the white plaster through the colouring, and when dry to scratch through to the plaster with a sharp tool for further detail. Additional interest was also given in the use of pastel for conventional surface detail, the whole being afterwards fixed by the application of boiled parchment size as a fixative.

The result is a continuous broken colour of dull surface, but luminous and pleasant in tone, reticent and unobtrusive in effect, and permanent and insoluble in nature.

The author claims for this process recognition as a basis sound in principle and worthy of further study and development, and advocates its further use. He believes it to be an excellent one in the hands of the right workmen, and worthy of their time and labour.

It is needless to say that the surface of the plaster must have its suction allayed to some extent by the application of a hot solution of shellac, or a similar preparation, before the application of the colouring matter. Wax colours, spirit fresco, and other media have been used, with but unsatisfactory results.

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From most of the old work, no matter how small the room, we receive an impression of simplicity and breadth, which the modern work does not show, and to it we keep returning.

Not only does this apply to the decorative work of the plasterer, but to the joiner's and stone mason's mouldings, and all the work of those early days. There is also an invaluable lesson for us in their manipulation of the material. When the castings were made from modelled enrichments, they were not cast with wood and fibre as they are now, but produced in short lengths, just so long as would draw from a mould of plaster (without the support of canvas and wood), in *solid plaster*, without



FIG. 464.—PORTION OF MODELLED AND COLOURED ("TEMPERA") FRIEZE (4 FEET 6 INCHES DEEP)  
IN GREAT GALLERY OF DUMBLETON HALL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.





breakage, and these short lengths of enrichments were placed in position, and stuck up with coarse plaster and lime putty, instead of being nailed and screwed into position as now. For genuine plasterwork this system should still be adhered to.

In these short lengths so fixed there was naturally less accuracy of line and surface, and the labour involved was most likely a little more. But time in those days was less considered than now, and the value of labour was very considerably less. We, at the present time, have serious obstacles to surmount in the production of work at the least possible cost—a wise restriction if not abused in principle.

Trades union laws are far more stringent than they were, and though they greatly increase the cost of production, there is this to be said for the modern work, that it is *mechanically* far more exact and precise than that which was done in the past. Trades unions are apt to legislate against low wages and long hours, but one never hears of them legislating against bad workmanship.

If the workers of those days had had the knowledge and the facilities of execution which we possess, they would have taken advantage of them, of course, and it is both natural and necessary to do so within certain limits in so far as we honestly can.

Right limitation now, as of old, does not imply either limitation of knowledge, scholarship, or power of technical expression, but it does and did imply a full knowledge of the right and wrong usage of medium.

The now general practice of introducing fibre and wood into our plaster castings is of comparative recent date, but there is precedent for it in the Egyptian custom of wrapping their mummies in canvas, steeped in burnt gypsum. It is also well known that putting canvas into castings of plaster was used extensively in France. (It was introduced into this country by a Frenchman named De Sachy, who cut his canvas into tiny squares, and dabbed them one over another in bulky form.)

In castings of this sort made in the early and middle nineteenth century, female labour was at first employed, but this system of working was not perfected until long after its introduction and the expiration of the patent.

Objections to fibrous plaster have been raised by some very able men, on the ground that it is not a natural process, and that there is danger in such a mixture of unsympathetic materials, and in the employment of screws and nails for the purpose of fixing the stuff. Because in a single instance some work executed in fibrous plaster had to be taken down, its use was condemned altogether, whereas it could have been proved that the fault was not in the fibre, which is practically imperishable, but in the “boiled” plaster of Paris, which is less hard and durable than the baked plaster, and should never be used in casting.

There are proper objections, of course, to the use of inferior timber in the castings, particularly if it be insufficiently seasoned, when shrinkage occurs, and the joints have a tendency to open. Another is to the screwing or nailing up of the castings in long lengths, which is not the right work for a plasterer. There are, however, strong reasons for its employment which outweigh all the objections.

We designers and makers of things are to some extent naturally and wisely conservative in our methods of designing and building, and yet, under pressure of business, are sometimes obliged to resort to the quickest and easiest means of obtaining the end in view, and when, as in the present case, the modern process



or method has the advantage over the other of being both quicker and cheaper, it would be foolish not to employ it. Nevertheless there is a dangerous tendency at the present time to compel modern methods to the reproduction in soft plaster of old forms, as in the case of deeply undercut detail.

Nevertheless love of the old work has never been stronger than it is at the present time. With admiration for the spirited modelling of the later Renaissance in England comes the desire to apply decoration of a similar character to public and private buildings; but this, I regret to say, is usually done in a much softer material than that which was formerly used, viz., plaster of Paris cast from gelatine moulds with fibrous construction.

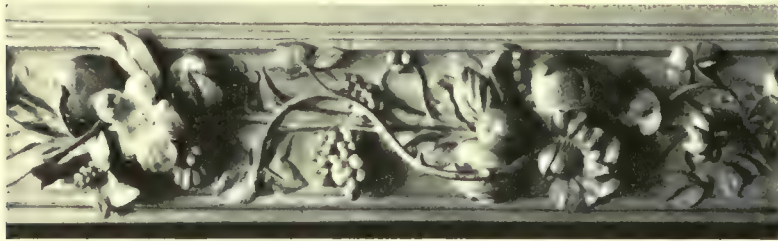


FIG. 465.—Organ Gallery, Belton House.

I do not wish it to be thought that I in any way depreciate modern processes which have come to stay, believing, on the other hand, that we should make the most of the inventions and processes which are at

the worker's disposal now. But after admitting the claims of the new to a certain amount of respect, the mind will return to the old with its special qualities—qualities which I maintain to be due to the hard, crisp nature of the material used, which enabled it to be worked in waves and caves, rolling and twisting forms, crisp and sharp arrises, thin leafage, flowers, twisted and corkscrewed stems, deep hollows, holding colour and shadow, half absorbent, half reflectant, like carved marble of finest quality, and carried to a degree beyond the power and reach of the chisel, even in the making and the setting of its petals (Figs. 465, 466).

It is beyond doubt that such a work as this and thus described cannot properly be cast nor put together in a soft material, and yet I can see no reason why the recipe Vitruvius gave us should not be used at the present day by men who, with brush or trowel, might be at work upon wall and ceiling, even as Raphael and his contemporaries were in the golden age of the art.



FIG. 466.—Organ Gallery, Belton House.

Referring again to the stucco-work of the Renaissance in England, which we attempt to imitate now in plaster of Paris (a soft plaster) cast from gelatine moulds, the modern method, if it were always rightly employed with its limitations well understood, would be as legitimate as that of the old stucco-workers.

What is wrong in the present practice is attempting to make the soft, fragile material take the crisp, sharp, and deep hollow undercutting of the harder stuff. It

cannot be made to take a sharp edge that at the same time is *serviceable*, and although it can be built up of innumerable pieces cast separately, we cannot get away from the fact that much of the beauty of the hard-setting material, left clean and crisp from the metal tool, must be lost by the process of casting and mechanical reproduction, whether done *en masse* or in individual pieces.

I would not lay stress on the much vexed question of style, either that of the past or the present. There has been much discussion about it, but when all has been said, does it come to much more than just this, that both the instinct and the inspiration of the designer can be traced to three sources—to Nature in the first instance, to the love that is in us of art, and to the opportunity of expressing his feeling for both which he has in the work before him?

The treatment of large surfaces is productive of much congenial thought. A ceiling may, for instance, become a trellis, interwoven and “embroidered” with various growths, whether fixed up in large panels or modelled *in situ*. We see it sometimes in the looping of stems over leafage, or stems by the use of wire round which is wrapped fibre, steeped in plaster, and applied *in situ*, giving thus a counter-rhythm of crisp light and shade over the whole ceiling area. Where the vine is used as the basis of the design, a pleasing contrast may be found in the casting of pendant bunches of grapes in the round, and in the fixing of these at intervals *in situ*, hanging down from the surface of the ceiling in pendant form. Flat or moulded bands of softly modelled enrichment, simply placed, may be arranged in multitudinous ways to soften the bareness or panel the area of the ceiling. Other bands of lesser width may be interlaced, perhaps diagonally, or perhaps squarewise, on a flat ceiling, or on the surface of a waggon-vault. These bands of enrichment may be arranged to fit in with one another with mitre-blocks modelled for intersection. If the means are available, it is better still to allow the pattern to intersect at haphazard, each intersection being made a study of as the work proceeds.

In cases of this kind it will be seen how important it is that the worker and the designer should be one and the same person, and it is here that the combined worker finds his opportunity and pleasure. As the plasterer of the present day has only too few of these, it is not to be wondered at that he finds his work dull and uninteresting.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century there has been a revival of interest in decorative plasterwork, with evidence of it in some of the public and private buildings of our country. The reaction, for such it is, is undoubtedly a reaction from the complete stagnation and complete *misuse* of the plasterer's art; but although much good work has been done, it cannot be said to be altogether of a legitimate kind, inasmuch as it attempts in a new way to reproduce the design and style of a period in which the modelling was executed *in situ* and in another substance. This is no form of personal preference or prejudice, but plain irrefutable fact which some architects conveniently refuse to see.

The attempt, such as it is, has been to produce imitations of the stucco-duro of Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, Gibbs, and others. But there is this great difference between the modern method and theirs. (Between stucco-work executed *in situ*, and the imitation of it by fibrous casting.) The one was the work of a company of sympathetic men who were really artists as well as executants, working



together as one man in the manipulation of an exceedingly sympathetic, subtle, hard, and durable material, which could be regulated to any degree in its setting. We have seen in many of the previous illustrations what could be done with it, and how, like no other plaster, it was capable of being woven into a "gossamer."

We have seen how flowers, leaves, and birds in high, deeply-modelled relief, hardly more than the thickness of stout drawing paper, were modelled with fingers and tools *in situ* in the actual plaster, fine drawn at its edges, full of detail, with stem and branches twisting and twirling and cork-screwing in and out, as the fancy of the modeller dictated, reflecting crisp lights, holding shadow, and beautiful half-tone quality, being at times even intricate in its detail as a bramble bush, but still conventional, under the controlling lines of the architect. Besides being thin, this material was absolutely hard and durable, resisting damp and also damage, unless wilfully inflicted. Instead of which we have plaster of Paris, sound, dull, short to work, quick setting, and generating heat in so doing.

This imitative work was undoubtedly good in spirit, but possessing *fatal shortcomings in the softness of the plaster*, and which cannot do what is required of it.

The mouldings to be enriched were worked with an overwrought perfection of mechanism. The enrichment modelled in clay, no matter how well, became vastly different in its cast state. The clay model may have sharpness, brisk definition, well-studied light and shade, and careful detail, but when the casting comes, let us see what the process is. A model in clay is first produced, perhaps sharp and crisp in every detail so far as clay will permit. This model, bedded in its mouldings, is laid on its back on the bench, coated with shellac and grease to prevent the adhesion of the clay to the gelatine. It is then covered with a layer of paper, and that again with a thin layer of clay. With all this to go through, it should be obvious to all who have seen it practised that the sharpness and crispness of the original and subtleties of the surface modelling cannot escape deterioration under the painting process invariably practised, and the pressure however slight, and the covering of paper and clay.

Nor is this all; the modeller, knowing the work would be cast in gelatine, would not be at the trouble of undercutting and perforating his clay, so as to give it that degree of lightness and delicacy which was the making and the essential technical qualification of the older and legitimate process.

This fact alone gives to the modelling a heaviness and clumsiness unknown in the old stucco process of the Italians. It has also the disadvantage of being open to much abuse in the hands of callous and unsympathetic casters, who care nothing about the original production of the modeller.

Concerning the ostracism of high relief, it is the legitimate use of both high (undercut) relief (as also low relief) modelling in situations respectively appropriate to their values and effects, and in the power of determining the particular circumstances of the building which the art is employed to adorn, that is the true kernel of the nut.

The "artist" naturally feels whatever limitation there may be in his medium—but *it is because the "artist" has so long been divorced from the craft of the plasterer*, and because modern plasters are being so grossly misused by decorators who are not

"artists," that it is so necessary to insist upon this question of right and wrong use of material being upheld.

After covering the model, as before mentioned, with shellac, paper, and clay, a case or "matrix" is cast from this clay bulk. Into this reversed case or matrix, after the removal of the paper and clay, the gelatine has to be poured whilst at a certain degree of heat. It will be seen from this that to pull out the gelatine (the reverse mould) intact from a very deeply undercut model of clay is by no means an easy matter. Gelatine, however refined, can never give to a casting the crispness and subtlety of edge possessed by the clay model, or by the old stucco-work which it is supposed to resemble.

Another process in some cases is sometimes resorted to for rendering the first plaster model as crisp and as sharp as possible. This method, known as "waste moulding," may seem better at first than the jelly process, inasmuch as the definition is sharper and the model harder to work from. But there is the same deterioration in the casting from the jelly mould as in the other case. Not only does deterioration take place in each stage of procuring a first model, but it is continued throughout each casting. The surface of the gelatine mould suffers through the generation of heat in the setting of the plaster, which is apt to blister and melt the gelatine surface, and cannot be removed until after the generated heat has subsided, and the plaster has hardened sufficiently to allow the jelly mould to be removed.

In this process all delicate modelling is very liable to fracture, and is subject to damage in being parted from the jelly mould, or when the jelly mould has been torn. It is easy to see the difference between the two processes. At the same time the introduction of this process marked an improvement, and much work is now done by this means, which, to my mind, might be much better. Until plasterers can be persuaded to slake their lime in the old manner for at least two or three years before being used, this system must hold good for the production of undercut workmanship. Until they can again be persuaded to practise modelling *in situ*, with material gauged, as of old, with marble dust or very fine grit, the modeller has no other alternative. Considering the rapid strides which have been made of recent years through the advance of the craft guilds, which are laying a sure foundation in good taste, refinement, and genuine workmanship, not to mention the many advantages of learning and facilities for working which have never before existed, it does not seem beyond the bounds of possibility that the art of the stucco-worker may again replace the imitative process of casting in jelly from clay models. The difference of cost may for some time delay the revival of this more legitimate and beautiful process, but it is my firm belief that, once again introduced, the cost of working would not greatly exceed that of the jelly process. With incalculably finer results, the work can be rapidly executed.

It is hardly likely that workers will not be forthcoming, nor that in the handling of the material there will be just as much freedom and delicacy as there was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Apart from the question of the seasoning of the material, given reasonable time, taste, ability, and reasonably adequate funds, there should be no serious obstacle in the way of a revival of "stucco-duro" *in situ* in or upon our modern buildings.



The question of taste or design is a matter which cannot be settled offhand. It is a mistake to suppose that stucco-work requires proportionally much greater time than modelling in clay, for it was all done very rapidly, and, as may be proved from existing accounts, was not excessively costly.

In a ceiling or piece of work where symmetry or balance is required in the

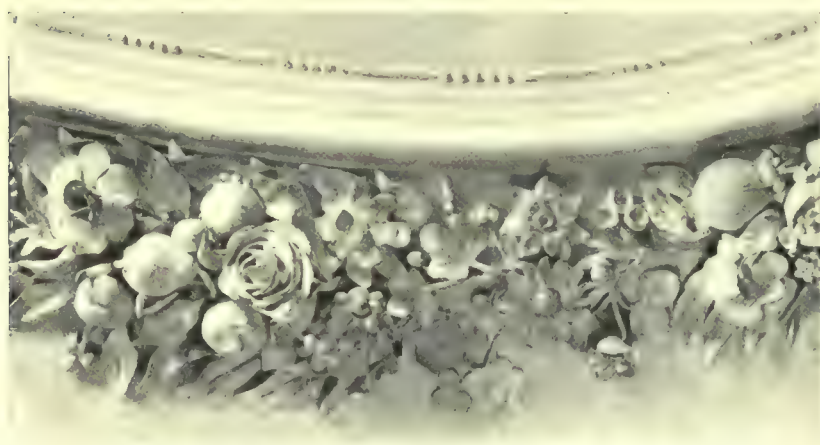


FIG. 467.—Stucco-duro modelled *in situ* (also Fig. 393).

reversing of a pattern to right or left, the process required little or no more time than the present custom of modelling in clay, and the double (or treble) casting in fibrous plaster from moulds of gelatine, as frequently done under present conditions and methods of working.

In stucco-duro there is only one process, and it is no

more troublesome or difficult to model in stucco than in clay, with this advantage, that the modelling done *in situ* is fresh, and is left clean, sharp, and intact, to speak for itself, instead of being "reproduced" by a deteriorating and disappointing process of casting. Again, if stucco-work had been a very costly process, it would never have been so universally practised throughout the whole of Europe as it has been.



FIG. 468.—Plaster of Paris Casting from Jelly Mould off Clay Model.

On the other hand, its commonness and cheapness were at one and the same time the cause of its great and extensive employment, and of its downfall.

Its abandonment was due, in my opinion, not to its great costliness, but to its abuse, to the excessive amount of poor work that was executed in it, and the reaction created by its abuse.

Since this medium of the plasterer has passed three stages of obscurity and revival, it now seems likely enough that on account of its beauty and serviceability it may be wanted again.

Figs. 467, 468 show clearly at a glance the vast difference of quality between the two systems which have been described.

The easier method of producing modelled enrichment from moulds of plaster, where strong, deeply undercut relief is not essential, brings much matter for reflection concerning general treatment and technique. The two processes cannot be compared; the one laborious, the other more free and easy. In a large room where breadth of treatment is desirable, broad vigorous bands of full, rich cast modelling may be arranged with perhaps little detail or clear definition of outline. A room of lesser dimensions and of less height, intended for retirement and relaxation, would call for a simpler arrangement, and greater delicacy of design and execution throughout.

The distance from the eye will settle the treatment and scale. Depending on circumstances, there may either be modelling in slight relief with clear definition of form, or with only suggestive form, and it may be felt that fuller relief, or less convention of form, is needed. Methods of modelling vary so much, and in so many ways, that it is not possible or desirable to advocate

any particular one. It is certain that the modeller's best tools are his fingers, and that modelling is not carving, for the former means adding a soft material to a background of similar nature, while carving is a subtraction or cutting away of a harder medium, a point very generally overlooked in the desire for "richness" and "sparkle."

A soft material, such as plaster, requires soft treatment, and does not lend itself readily to undercutting. Clay, like plaster, is susceptible to every touch of the finger through which the feeling for form is conveyed, and it seems very hard, such being its nature, that under the present system of education and employment there is comparatively so little call for the artist's best.

The average modeller is not supposed or allowed to have an individuality or personality, nor to suggest; he is not allowed to use his material as it should be, but obliged in too many cases to give us an imitation of the true stucco in that, and in many



FIG. 469.—Example of Modern Centre-Flower.



FIG. 470.—Example of Old Centre Ornament (also Fig. 212).





FIG. 471.

built up in stucco-duro with metal tools. Coarse and stiff in detail and lacking in subtlety of form and contour in the leafage, it can but contrast painfully with Fig. 470 as being in every way unsuited to existence in a soft material apart from its aggressiveness.

Figs. 471 and 472 are other productions of the present-day journeyman modeller, and are very fair examples of such work.

These will show the results of the two conditions of occupation. The one a free man, as happy as he need be, and the other, who should be the artist we had in the craftsman of olden times, the victim of the conditions under which he must work to-day.

instances an imitation of marble, stone, or wood-carving. Can he be expected under such circumstances to produce work of exceptional quality?

Figs. 469 and 470 show two ceiling ornaments by way of contrasting right and wrong principles and methods of working.

Fig. 470 is eminently suited in every way to the modelling in plaster—is pleasant in form—unobtrusive to the eye, and suitable to place and purpose. Apart from this it is not liable to easy damage.

Fig. 469, on the other hand, is the work of the modern journeyman in imitation of an ornament



FIG. 472.

## PART II.—THE TEACHING OF THE PAST: A COMPARISON.

That will be an evil day in which we cease to benefit from the experience, the struggles, the disappointments, the shortcomings, and the failures of those who have worked before us.

The coatings and colourings which were applied to the walls 3,500 years before Christ speak to us of their durability and of the approval and acceptance of plaster as the material in which the rough walls of those days could be most suitably clothed.

There is evidence enough in the tombs of the suitability of stucco for the application of tempera painting, of the fineness of the medium, and the durability of the colouring which was laid on it.

Passing over some thousands of years, we see unsurpassable beauty, subtlety, and delicacy in the modelled decoration of buildings of the first half of the first century. It speaks of the extraordinary decorative instinct and of the powers of

execution possessed by the stucco-workers of Greece and Rome, whose equals we shall not find.

The greatest artists of the Renaissance were lost in admiration of these remnants of classical times. With almost unbounded energy they sought to recover the secrets of the lost art of the stucco-workers, and had the pursuit of their investigations made easy by the unlimited bounty of the Pope and the rulers of Italy.

They discovered its fineness of polish, and that gold and colour were commonly laid on its surface, and that externally as much as internally it was in general use as a coating of a most tempting nature.

We read of academies for the teaching of the art at Rome, Florence, Mantua, and Venice, and that from those centres the knowledge of it extended throughout the most of Western Europe. We have seen how the native workers of France and England had it from the fathers of the Italian Renaissance, and how in each of these countries it was gradually naturalised.

We have shown how the abundance of timber led, in this country, to the general use of timber framing in the construction of buildings, and how the voids between the framings were filled with a kind of soft plaster, sometimes of the coarsest kind, which lent itself readily to decoration by the rough hand of the mason, either inside the building or out.

We recollect the invasion of England under Henry VIII. by many Italian artists, who, after the breach with Rome, were replaced in the main by Protestant refugees, who might be German, Flemish, or Dutch, but as artists were welcomed here; and also remember that the frequent visits of Queen Elizabeth to mansions and palaces within her domain gave her subjects a very good reason for preparing splendidly decorated suites of apartments for the reception of Her Majesty in the handsomest possible manner.

The prosperity and peace of those times favoured the development of our hunting and sporting proclivities, and led incidentally to the addition of large reception rooms and private apartments for the entertainment of visitors.

Next to be noticed were the sweeping changes in building construction brought about by the destruction of timber-built houses in London by the Great Fire of 1666, before which the visits of Inigo Jones and numerous contemporary architects to Italy had given us a foretaste of the Renaissance, and the later phase of it which drew its inspiration directly from Rome.

The arts, which were paralysed under the Commonwealth, revived under Charles II., who encouraged Italian builders. The rebuilding of London was undertaken by Christopher Wren, whose methods were carried into the provinces, where palatial dwellings became fashionable.

The lesson of history is that the best work is done when the material, whether stucco, parge, or plaster of Paris, is worked in the natural way, and not forced into imitation of the carving of either marble, stone, or wood. History shows also that decoration was not invariably the primary object with the workers of early times, for bosses and mitre leaves were sometimes applied only to hide the mechanical shortcomings and defects in the mitreing of ribs. Another and common mistake is that of supposing the undulating surfaces of the old ceiling



would have been tolerated had the masons been skilful enough to lay a flat surface.

At the same time, it must not be imagined that the mere skill of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is inferior to that of the sixteenth, when the home of this art was in Italy. And why? Because the working conditions have been reversed. It is the mechanic divorced from the artist who handles the material now, and his skill is far beyond that of any earlier workers in England (of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, say).

Interesting and beautiful as their work was in its first stages, we must not ignore their defects which time has effaced in some measure. They are obvious, such as they were; and it is admissible that the old-time craftsman was to some extent an indifferent *mechanic*, doing his best under the circumstances of his time, which had not then bred an undue yet unconscious mechanical precision; but, on the other hand, what all must admire is their sense of arrangement and decoration, and in their work its simplicity, bigness, and breadth of treatment.

It does not follow that because the surface of the ceiling bulged or undulated it was altogether due to the negligence of the plasterer; all the crafts were alike in this respect. Joists were worked by hand, often unevenly laid, and irregular of under surface. Walls bulged also, as they had not the mechanical appliances of the nineteenth century to help them, nor had they the help of science, nor had they our "schools of art." What they did was done easily and naturally, and was passed from one to another. The material was mixed, as it had been for centuries, according to usage. They relied while they applied it upon sureness of hand and eye, and had less use for the rule than we have.

*What they did understand was the plasticity of the stuff they were working in, and what they never attempted was violating its nature.*

As the painter who cares for his canvas does not squeegee its surface all over with a straight-edge to give it unnatural smoothness, neither should those who understand plaster attempt to impart an unnatural smoothness to it by the use of that tool and polishing.

If mechanical skill be the plasterer's diploma, then should the twentieth century be able to dim the glories of the Italian Renaissance; but I fear there is something lacking. It is not for me to suggest the remedy. Time alone will work that. I do not think any one is to blame for the stagnation of the last century, but that it is the natural condition of ebb and flow in the tide of men's affairs. I believe that we must go back again to the simplicity of line, of form, and of spirit, in the giving of pleasure in our work.

If this object is unattempted and unaccomplished, by lack of desire or knowledge of the sense of beauty on the part of the people, and of the worker, then the world will be so much the poorer by ignoring, not only the art of the plasterer, but all the lesser arts

## CHAPTER XIV.

## NOTES ADDRESSED TO STUDENTS AND APPRENTICES.

To plasterers' apprentices, young modellers, students, and others directly or indirectly associated with the subject of the foregoing pages, the following concluding words are particularly addressed. To have a daily occupation possessing an absorbing and widening interest is a condition unhappily not the lot of all, and perhaps seldom recognised or thought of by the British workman. In the case of those following a trade which has for so long been nothing more than a trade or drudging means of livelihood, it is difficult to awaken more than occasional individual interest, and in this, long habit has become custom.

Whatever may be the nature and degree of one's work, it is always open to noble treatment, in the giving of pleasure to the eye. Even in so ordinary a matter as the laying a coat of common plaster on a wall or ceiling, accidental play of surface may be turned to good account. It is the object of the writer of the foregoing pages to incite some fresh and real interest amongst those workers who may be responsible for the craft in the future, and to help those who are interested in their work beyond the range of wages and beer. The hope of any future resuscitation of the once national decorative art of plastering lies greatly with the present-day apprentice. Can he but be got to understand and feel the difference between the mechanical drudgery of the present trade system and the pleasure he may derive from the pursuit of his trade as something more than a trade, viz., as an art, and to exert his interest and energy in this direction, there may be some hope of the foundation of a school (possibly a national school) of decorative plasterwork, which might be continually employed in the execution of excellent work.

It is perhaps in the beginnings that apparent difficulties present themselves. With probationers, a common difficulty is in knowing *how* to set about designing, and *what* design is. Expression in design has many apparent difficulties. It must always be remembered that the practice of an art or craft cannot be taught in print, and that it can only rightly be acquired by keeping oneself conversant with the delightful work which was done ages ago, and with the best art that is being done to-day.

The usefulness of this course cannot be too strongly advocated. The best education is to know the old work by heart, touch, and sight, for as we learn from the past what beauty of form is, so shall we better realise how to express it in our own way. Then, try to do something like it, without copying, until ideas begin



to develop, for in this way variation and invention is gradually (though perhaps unconsciously) prompted and developed according to the aptitude of the individual. Some of the best old examples may be copied in part with advantage, if not done too slavishly, but at the same time sufficiently well to feel and appreciate the scale and the decorative setting of the work. It is from the old work we should learn in principle what has been accomplished, and how it was done, and from the best living workers how to apply our gathered knowledge to circumstances of modern construction and material.

In this manner, and by introducing some slight variation or change by way of invention, design in its elementary form may be conceived, but it can be cultivated only *by designing*, and by cultivating also a habit of noting down and absorbing as much of the spirit of the best work of other minds as can be retained, and, thus fortified, in trying to express one's own ideas in one's own way, without that affectation which is accepted by some persons as "originality."

The mission of ornament is to be beautiful, and to give pleasure to the eye, not only in its own form, but in its happy distribution and placing. Enrichment for enrichment's sake only, is not necessarily either ornament or decoration.

"Design" is the formation of a scheme or plan in the mind; it may be harmonious or otherwise, but decorative design is the language of pleasurable expression by harmonious arrangement of line or form, in the adjusting, compelling, or convening of form to fill a given space in a manner most appropriate to and easily expressible in the material used.

In the cultivation of the art of designing, or of expressing ideas, in the language of conventional decoration, one should, at the same time, acquire a knowledge of architecture, and of the construction of buildings, for good decoration only serves its purpose and function by being subservient to the general design of the building of which it is but a small part, by becoming a part of the construction of the building itself, or a covering or casing to construction perhaps better concealed. The three things are really inseparable, and cannot healthily thrive without unison. This is so plainly manifest in much of the present-day "trade" decoration that little further comment is necessary.

Continuous efforts to revive the various branches of decorative design have gained progress during the last half-century and more, and yet, with all the facilities and advantages for acquiring knowledge, modern design falls far below the quality of decorative beauty possessed by the schools of workmanship acquired during the old system of apprenticeship in the workshop of a working master craftsman, when the trade or craft was followed as an art generally. This system of apprenticeship (fostered by the guild system of the Middle Ages) was vastly different from that of the present day, in which the term "guild" is but a misuse of the word in every way, a catch phrase for business purposes, boasting unity, but possessing none save *the Unit*.

In the development of the art of designing lies also another valuable asset in the cultivation of the art of analysis, the power of discerning and portraying simple abstract form in the main mass, in the bulk preceding detail, in the main detail itself, and again in the lesser detail.

The sketch book and the camera are valuable means to this end, so long as the purpose is not abused, so long as the habit and process of notation, the mental dissection of parts, the analysis of detail, &c. &c., is pursued as an aid to memory and a stimulus to imagination. Beyond this the sketch book and camera may become superfluous, if not detrimental.

In his analysis let the student look out for and note those peculiarities and qualities of form and expression which give national character to the old work,—which render the work of Italy distinctly Italian in nature, of France distinctly French, of Scotland distinctly Scottish, and the work of the English school distinctly English in character, and let him as far as possible lie in him impart, or try to impart, into his own work some of that same underlying expression which shall render his work English in character for English people, for by this means alone can the hopes of a revival of a National School be justified or maintained, rather than by stealing the nature of other nationalities, and jumbling into our modern buildings.

The student must remember that the Italian sunshine has given to the Italian nature that life and brilliancy which is not a part of the environment or of the life of the English people, that the delicacy and extreme subtlety of refinement of form in French decorative art are peculiar also to the same character in the French nature, for it is as impossible for an Englishman to impart true French character into the production of French style and detail, as for him to be a Frenchman, or for a Frenchman to give that peculiarity of character which distinguishes English work, and Scottish work, from all other. Nothing can be more obvious in support of this point than the vast amount of so-called “Louis XIV. and XV.” decoration produced in this country by English modellers for English architects, notwithstanding the national aptitude for “reproduction.” But it satisfies the eye and the observation of the multitude, as a Sunday garment covers sin!

The young student will find much food for reflection in considering what may be the chief reasons for the general shortcoming in design of present-day decorative art. Of so-called “decorative” art there is superabundance, and failure is in no way due to lack of opportunity for designing, or to lack of designers. In no other age have educational facilities existed such as our “Schools of Art,” Institutes of Learning, National and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and every accessible form of wealth in the finest collected examples of the world’s best design and workmanship. Photography and the printing press are flooding the world with a vast accumulation of illustrated matter from the old and the living world, in nature and antique study, such as has never been the good fortune of any other age; and yet withal, nineteenth-century design has failed miserably in comparison with that of bygone periods. Why is this? There must be some good reason for it! It may be that we rest too much content with our national gift of mimicry, without further endeavour; it may be that we are too content to imitate the old work without emulating the worker’s capacity, enthusiasm, and aptitude for acquiring inspiration and new life from natural form, whilst being content to go on developing ideas on traditional methods.

In the plasterer’s craft they had nothing else to fall back on, so they fell back on



nature. Nature in all her seasons is full of beautiful suggestions, now as ever, for those who will cultivate the mind and the eye to see, and the hand to do their bidding.

Failure in decorative design is attributable also to other causes, commonly to a lack of understanding the difference between pictorial (natural) form, and decorative form, "holding up the mirror to Nature," as it were, with a vengeance!

The cultivation of the decorative instinct, that is to say of metre, rhythm, balance and contrast of line or form in harmony,—resembles that of harmony of sound in that it is akin to the construction and composition of music and of speech, and is no less variable than either in expression and mannerism.

Mannerism in design (as in other forms of art) resembles mannerism in speech. A man can impart delight to others by beautiful thought, eloquence, or simplicity of speech (or word harmony), he can also by eloquence or simplicity of notation (or musical harmony), and so he can through the sight, by contrasted harmony of line and form, by "decoration." The same or similar elements and principles govern all these, and the same power of concentration has created them.

What the average student most lacks as a general rule is the great power of concentration,—concentration of purpose, of thought, and of will; the focussing power and interest which turns his work into pleasure, and his pleasure into play. The lack of this concentrative power breeds hesitation, and hesitation indicates lack of knowledge of the elements of his subject, of clearness of insight, and lack of effort or initiative, a retrogressive method! Once a student one should be always a student, for experience teaches that the more one learns the more there is to learn, to interest, to do.

Some persons accomplish by instinct what others do through labour,—labour due to lack of personal effort and cultivation. It is wise, therefore, to keep an open, unbiassed, and retentive mind for the good things about us; to find out, and live with, whatever is interesting, refined, and dignified of this kind; to cultivate an observation and love of nature in all her phases, and take from her storehouse just so much as may be serviceable for our particular purpose, without excess or vulgarity.

Exuberance of ornament, sometimes even of good ornament, is no less nauseous and harmful to good taste than exuberance of rhetoric, or of rich food to the system.

There is always the consideration of restraint in design, as in funds. Wise restraint of funds in some cases teaches breadth and simplicity of treatment in design, and is not always incompatible with the overloading of ornament.

Simplicity of design (like that of speech) on the other hand seems the more difficult to the uninitiated for the lack of cultivated restraint in the knowledge of value, and choice of form in expression.

It is at least in the thorough familiarity with the elements of one's subject that the seeds of mastery may be found and grown. There is but one Art, whatever the medium, viz., the expression of man's delight in creation, and in his environments, whether decoratively or pictorially. Examination and analysis of the finest examples of ancient art often reveals in the abstract simplicity personified, if glorified.

The pursuit of decorative art has many stumbling-blocks, which it behoves

all students to beware. Some of these have already been mentioned in the preceding pages; a common one, even in some instances of talent and great promise of good work, is that personal arrogance so hindering to progress. A student gets so far, and in the conceit of his accomplishments rests content with his ability, and relaxes further effort.

This is particularly noticeable in the work of some students of the nude, where a certain degree of knowledge and facility of practice in modelling the figure, places beneath their contempt the study of other forms of decoration.

I refer more particularly to the combination of floral, fruit, or of other forms of conventional decoration in which the great masters of the fifteenth century were so versatile in their combination. With them, one form was equally important and necessary as the other, but it appears to be not so with the modern academic school of figure modellers, who draw a broad dividing line between the two gifts.

The glory of the old school lies in the happy combination of both, and for evidence of this a reference to the work of the early fifteenth-century Italian school as propagated by Raphael and his contemporaries, is enough to illustrate the truth of this point.

In this school we find the true development of the architectural with every decorative faculty, even in combination with the pictorial element in the setting of the panels of the ceilings and walls of the chambers. Nor do they stop at that, but give us also the stories, allegories, and mystic tales of classic times, in combination with the rest.

No form of detail seemed too trivial for their use. Hence the great interest of their work—and it was only in the over-indulgence and abuse of this gift, and in its prolific employment that their work gradually became commonplace.

With the present revival of architecture, handicraft has found a new awakening in the desire for its use in simple form, and its present mission lies in the application of present-day materials to the adornment of present-day construction, rather than in the employment of cheap imitation and make-believe, in materials entirely foreign to the nature of plaster, such as carton pierre, stamped paper pulps, and other base forms of imitation. It follows then that the pleasure, the interest, and the success accruing from the study and practice of this subject lies entirely in the hands of the student himself, according to the degree of his personality, activity, industry, and perseverance.

Let those young men who may be interested in and daily occupied with the plasterer's trade take up the study of the subject in its various aspects as a hobby, quite apart from their daily work, and try to find employment in one or another of the workshops where the plasterer's trade is being followed in its better aspects. Let them acquire at the same time some facility of drawing and modelling, and, with a knowledge of the best old work, try to put some of that spirit into their own work; then, with time, patience, and perseverance, their trade will come to possess for them an interest and value that will carry them into higher realms of thought and action, which will make their daily occupation worth living for, and something to be looked back upon as worthy of effort, and of pleasure to themselves and to



others,—in a word, an “art,” of absorbing interest, the pursuit of which will bring its own reward apart from monetary consideration.

With all his training and power as a mechanic, with his shorter working hours, superior facilities for learning, and with greatly increased wages, it is to be hoped that the skilled plasterer of the future will not allow the artistic paralysis of his craft during the nineteenth century to lie dormant and continue for ever. Surely, with the present re-awakening of the mother art of architecture, with the public desire for good building, and the unprecedented and abounding wealth of the present age, there should be sufficient inducement for him to put his house in order, to pursue his trade in its higher forms, and at least to try to make his calling as rich and interesting in result as did his rustic predecessors of three hundred years ago.

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